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#7 • JUNE 2003

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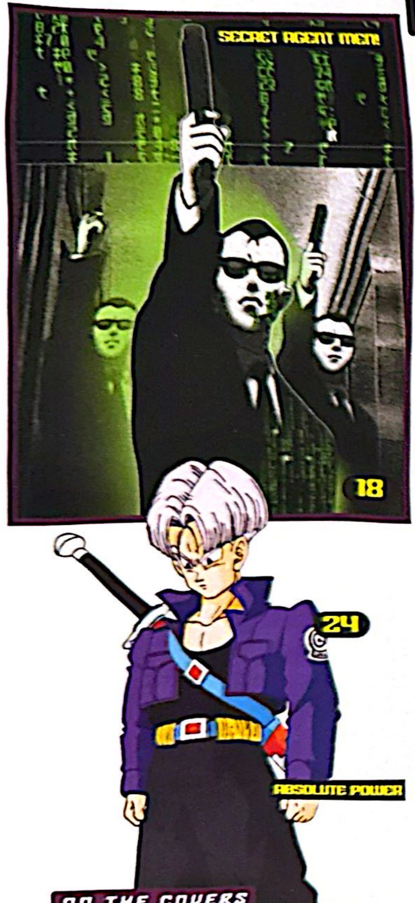

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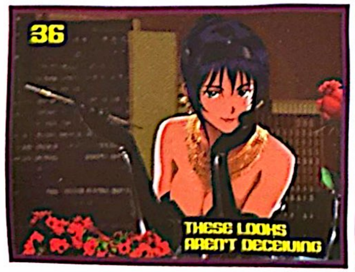
ON THE COVERS

Left, *Dragon Ball*'s Goku is present and accounted for courtesy of FUNimation and Akira Toriyama, while *Trigun*'s Vash stampedes into our hearts, thanks to Pioneer and Yasuhiro Nightow.



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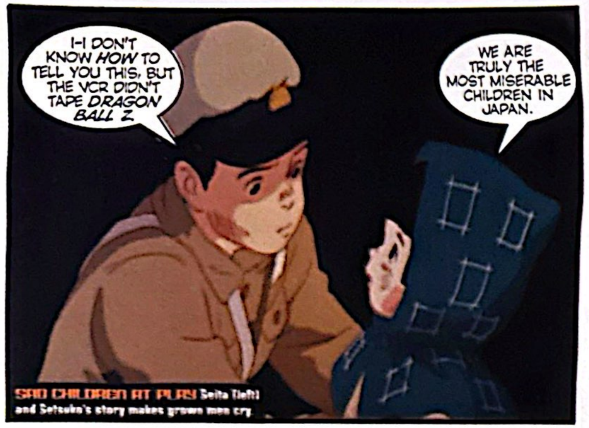
MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

FROM THE TOP

GRAVE TIDINGS FROM A 'GRAVE' MOVIE


I-I DON'T KNOW *HOW* TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT THE VCR DIDN'T TAPE *DRAGON BALL Z.*
WE ARE TRULY THE MOST MISERABLE CHILDREN IN JAPAN.

SAD CHILDREN AT PLAY! Seita (left) and Setsuko's story makes grown men cry.

I'd rather not write this right now. In fact, I'd rather not write anything. I watched *Grave of the Fireflies* a few days ago, and I've been too busy staring at the wall all day.

As part of my job at *Anime Insider*, I watch anime every evening. If I haven't seen it, I watch it to further my knowledge. In this case, Managing Editor Rob Bricken insisted I watch a copy of the new *Grave of the Fireflies* Special Edition DVD from Central Park Media. He said it was really good. An anime classic. He *didn't* tell me what to expect.

I'd just seen *Spirited Away* again, from Disney's three-movie Ghibli DVD set, a coming-of-age story with that depth of storytelling only anime can provide. I kind of assumed *Grave of the Fireflies* would be the same.

I was wrong. I am now staring at the wall, my spirit crushed and soul heavy. How else to respond to a movie that has no coming-of-age lesson, because the children don't get the chance to come of age? We learn in *the very beginning* of the movie that the main characters, the brother and sister pair trying to survive without parents in post-WWII Japan, starve to death. The wide-eyed spirit of youth was there at the start, but as the children moved from playing to looking for medical attention, their spirit was crushed and so was mine.

Now all I have the energy to do is stare at the wall. The other day Bandai's Marketing Manager Jerry Chu asked me if I'd cried after watching it, and the answer was no, since I didn't have spirit enough to shed tears (and I don't confess to crying to other men). I can't say I was happy to have seen *Grave of the Fireflies* any more than I can say I was happy to see *Schindler's List*, but I *was* happy to experience that kind of drama from anime—a form that too many see as just giant robots or fighting schoolgirls—and that is something I wouldn't trade for the world.

Sincerely,

Douglas Goldstein
Senior Editor

PS: Sorry for the downer, folks—your serving of robots in schoolgirl uniforms is coming right up!

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ANIMAIL!

BY TOM ROOT

LETTERS FROM FANS

Know what I like best about "Animail"? It's a two-way street! Sometimes I get to teach you guys about anime—like what kind of paper manga artists use or where to buy anime toys—and sometimes you guys teach me stuff!

I learned that y'all really, really dig Inu-Yasha. I learned that you guys never run out of battle ideas for our "Last Man Standing" column. I learned that if I lose my letter opener and try to rip open all the reader mail with my fingers, I'm going to get about 58 paper cuts. And finally, I learned that some of you have serious crushes on Hayao Miyazaki characters.

So whether you're asking me a burning anime question or you just have something to share, make sure to write, write, write! It's all good!

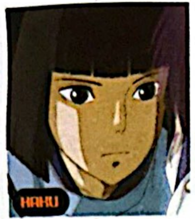
IT MAY LOOK LIKE TRASH, BUT THE STAMP I PUT ON IT MAKES IT MAIL!
US MAIL
HAND MAID MAY

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

OMG! A few nights ago I had a dream about Haku from *Spirited Away*! *I love him!* He's so damn hot. He, like, came back from this war and we hugged! Mmmm! I don't know why the hell I like him so much. Of all the boys in the world, I fall in love with a river spirit. I even wrote on my binder, "Haku = Hottie," so people walk up and say, "Who's this Haku?"

What do you think? Don't you think he's the *best*?

Alice Karsevar
via cyberspace



Alice = Crazy.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

Here's a question you probably haven't gotten before—it's about paper! I'm an aspiring comic artist and I'd like to draw on the exact same comic paper my favorite manga artists use. Is it the same stuff that American comic artists use?

Jeremy Moore
Madison, WI

American comic artists generally use 11 x 17-inch bristol board, on which they render an image of about 10 x 15. Japan, like most of the rest of the world, thinks measuring things in inches is stupid and therefore uses a metric size called "B4," which is 257 x 364 millimeters. (I curse you for making me figure out the math, but it's about 10.1 x 14.3 inches.)

I don't know who your favorite artists are, but I checked with manga superstar Kia Asamiya (through his American conduit C.B. Cebulski) and he uses a brand called Kodansha Afternoon B4 artboard. "It's a standard Japanese-size paper he gets from his Japanese publishers," Cebulski says.

You're going to have to be mighty resourceful to get your hands on this paper without speaking any Japanese. My advice is to find a Japanese-speaking buddy who can try to find it on[illegible] for you.

DEAR ANIME PEOPLE,

I haven't seen the *Cowboy Bebop* movie out yet. Th[illegible] said it has been moved back to a later date. If that is true, when is it coming out?

Christina Gonzales
Harlingen, TX

IF YOUR SHORTS WERE RIDING UP LIKE MINE, YOU'D SULK TOO.
COWBOY BEBOP

The current release date is set for April 4, which is only in select (read: big) cities. Whether or not it'll ever get shown in Harlingen, Texas, is anyone's guess, I'm afraid. "We'll have to wait and see," says Fritz Friedman, Sony Pictures' senior vice president of worldwide publicity, about Bebop's chances for a wider release. "We'll respond to the ultimate decision-makers —the movie-going public!"

Perhaps you and some of your friends can dress up like the Bebop characters and perform the movie at the local playhouse! That'd be fun!

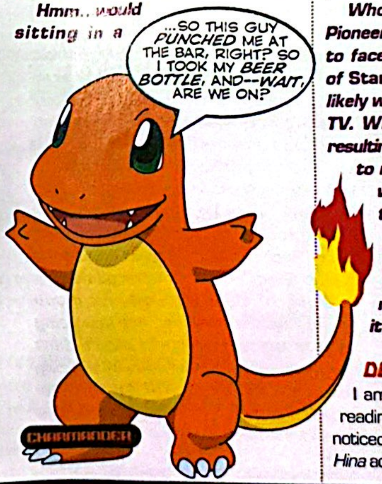
HEY ANIME INSIDER,

Do they re-dub the one-word dialogue of the Pokémon when they bring the cartoons over from Japan?

Ricardo C. Rebelo
Brampton, Ontario, Canada

For the most part, they leave what they can. Ikue Ootani provides the "pika pikas" in both the Japanese and the American series. However, a character like Charmander was actually "Hitokage" in the Japanese version, so it was impossible to leave the voice.

Hmm... would sitting in a recording booth yelling, "Char! Char!" all day be a sweet gig or would it make you want to hang yourself?


...SO THIS GUY PUNCHED ME AT THE BAR, RIGHT? SO I TOOK MY BEER BOTTLE, AND--WAIT, ARE WE ON?
CHARMANDER

HELLO ANIME PEOPLE,

Why is it that Pioneer or some other company hasn't simply put the *Sailor Moon Sailor Stars* series on DVD if so many people want to see it? I guess they won't bring the series to the States because it can't be shown on Cartoon Network. It's almost as if the studios don't believe it will be successful otherwise.

My view is, *who cares?* The *Ranma 1/2* series has never been shown on TV, to my knowledge, and is successful. As far as I'm concerned, *get cracking, Pioneer!* No excuses!

John McCoy
Council Bluffs, IA

Easy there, John. Here's Pioneer's response: "Officially, we don't have a comment on Sailor Stars until we finish releasing Super S, which won't be done until May 2003," says Chad Kime, assistant marketing manager. So there's no sense blaming Pioneer for not putting Stars on DVD until you know for sure they won't.

Whomever ends up with Stars, Pioneer or otherwise, they're going to face some difficulties. Because of Stars' transgender mayhem, it likely won't ever end up on national TV. Without TV money (and the resulting exposure), it's much harder to recoup the costs associated with dubbing the series. But this won't matter to the Japanese licensor, who will likely charge the U.S. distributor the same amount of money for the series whether it's on TV or not.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

I am a big fan of *Love Hina*. I was reading your Winter 2003 issue and noticed that you said there were *Love Hina* action figures available for sale, and I was wondering where I could buy them.

Roman Gonzales
RomRacerG7@aol.com

"Where can I buy it?" That might be the single most-asked question in "Animail" history. Unless we're talking about a big mainstream property (Digimon, Pokémon) you can buy at any Toys R Us or Wal-Mart, the only way to make sure you get the anime merchandise you're looking for is to use your wits. Even the biggest online anime retailers only carry a fraction what's available. So here are some tips for finding what you want:

1. If there's an anime store in your area, great! If not, check out stores like Suncoast, Electronics Boutique and most comic stores—they might

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TEAM ROCKET

By NATASHA AND JOSEPH

Prepare for trouble! Make it double...yeah, yeah, yeah. We've heard it all before. But we haven't seen such picture-perfect representations of the dastardly yet highly incompetent Jessie and James before! Surrender your plush Pokémon, or prepare to fight! Or take the easy way out and send us your anime costume snapshots, care of Anime Insider, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920 or via e-mail at animeinsider@aol.com. Don't forget to tell us how you made the costumes! ■ RB

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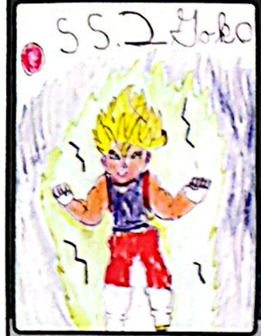
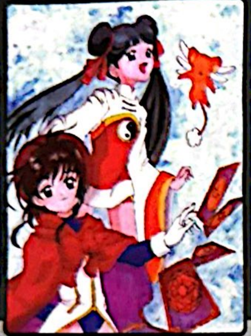


SS2 GOKU
MACK DUEHRING, ASHBURN, VA



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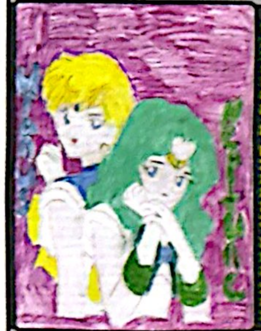

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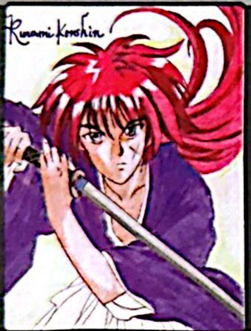

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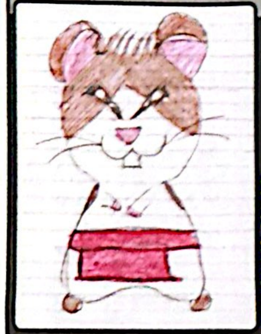

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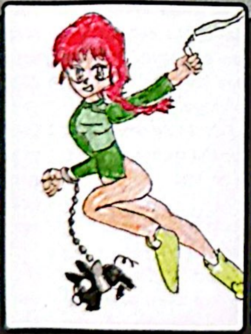

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still have a few Hina figures left.

2. Failing that, just look online. Just flip through our magazine to find out what's out there in cyberspace—most of the big Web stores advertise with us, and if they don't, they can burn in hell! Er, I mean, they really should. Heh heh.

3. eBay.com is your bestest friend. You can often find what you want cheaper than anywhere else! Just make sure to check the seller information to make sure they're reputable and won't leave you hanging after the sale.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

Do you think reading comics will ever be as big here as it is in Japan? I visited Tokyo last year and I was surprised to see grown-ups reading manga on the subway! And all the newsstands were crammed with manga. Why can't it be like that here?

Mike Wellsley
Rexburg, ID

It used to be that comics in the U.S. were strictly for kids. Then after the industry crashed in the 1990s, it seemed like comics were strictly for aging fanboys, while kids were far more interested in the latest video games and trading cards.

However (and this is just my armchair analysis), the line is definitely blurring in this country between "kid stuff" and grown-up entertainment. Kids who grew up playing video games are still playing them in their 20s and 30s. Kids who grew up with action figures are still collecting them well into adulthood. Heck, look at Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim"—cartoons for adults!

Think of this, too—when all you young readers grow up, are you going to stop reading manga? I didn't think so. Eventually, all the kids devouring comics nowadays will be manga-obsessed adults, and finally we'll have an entire society reading comic books.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

My friends and I are having an argument. Is *Powerpuff Girls* anime or isn't it? You'd better give me the right answer, because I've got Hot Pockets riding on this. And my friend Bret has to serve them to me

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Suggestive Themes
Violence

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wearing a pair of foam rubber moose antlers if I'm correct.

Nicky Paul
Santa Barbara, CA

Careful, Nicky. You start out gambling with Hot Pockets, then it moves up to Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, then one day you wake up and you've gambled away your little sister to Atlantic City thugs.

But Powerpuff Girls isn't anime. It certainly feels like it's in an anime style, but anime simply means Japanese animation. Powerpuff Girls isn't anime any more than Scooby-Doo is anime.

DEAR ANIME INSIDER,

I know there is an episode left out of the English version of *Mobile Suit Gundam*. I think #12 or #13, and I know director Yoshiyuki Tomino specifically asked that it be taken out. Why?

Paul Shelton
via cyberspace

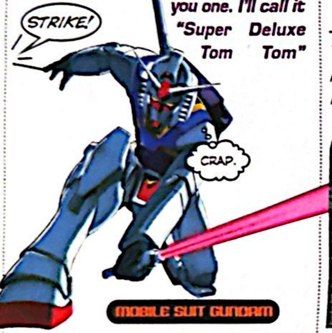
P.S. You should serialize a manga in your mag!

It was episode #15, titled "The Island of Kukuras Doan." It appears that Tomino did indeed ask that the episode get skipped. At an Anime Expo New York appearance in 2002 (which I found transcribed at AnimeonDVD.com), Tomino says that he's to blame for the missing episode, but since "the rest of the staff is still alive" he refused to elaborate. Wow, mysterious! People who've seen the episode say the animation is full of mistakes, so perhaps Tomino doesn't want it shown because it plain ol' sucks.

As for serializing a manga in our magazine, well, I suppose I could start drawing you one. I'll call it "Super Deluxe Tom Tom" and it'll be about an average guy who can take off his own head and throw it at people. Sound good? I'm warning you, it's going to be mostly stick figures. But hey—we want a comic too. We're definitely looking into it.

Aww, another fun month of letters and answers has come to a close! Time flies when you're...um, typing. Keep those letters coming, and I'll see ya next issue!

—Tom Root



Tom Root insists that nobody read the Anime Insider #6 "[illegible] mail" as long as Managing Editor Rob Bricken is still alive.

Send your letters to:
ANIME INSIDER
151 W[illegible] Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail to
AnimeInsider@aol.com

WORDS FOR THE WISE

Wanna Know What All These Anime Fans Are Jabbering About? Here's A Quick Rundown.

BAKA—(BAH-kah) Japanese for "idiot." Along with "kawaii," the most popular Japanese word learned by anime newbies.

DOOZO—(DOUGH-zo) The equivalent of "If you please." Listen for it when characters say, "Hai, doozo," which means, "Yes, go ahead!"

HENTAI—(HEN-tie) Japanese for "pervert" or "perverted." Refers to naughty anime and manga too.

MANGA—(MAHN-ga) Japanese comic books.

MANGA-KA—(MAHN-ga KA) A creator of manga.

OKONOMIYAKI—(Oh-KO-no-mee-yah-kee) A kind of Japanese pizza or pancake. *Ranma 1/2*'s Ukyo is an okonomiyaki chef.

OTAKU—(o-TAH-koo) Hardcore anime fan. If you bought this magazine, you probably are one.

SEIYUU—(SAY-yoo) A voice actor or actress.

SENSEI—(SEN-say) Teacher or instructor. Also used as an honorific: "Onizuka-sensei."

SHOJI—(SHO-jee) A movable room partition made out of wood and rice paper. The doors slide on tracks.

SHÔNEN—(SHO-nehn) An adjective meaning "for boys." Shônen manga, shônen anime, etc. Shojo is the equivalent "for girls."

YATTA!—(YAH-ta) An exclamation meaning "I did it!" ("Yatta! I ate an entire large pizza!") ■ RB

CULTURE SHOCKER

EXPLAINING THE JAPANESE CULTURE FOUND WITHIN ANIME

MUST REMEMBER... NOT FOR EATING...
SAKURA

Even novice anime watchers have probably noticed cherry blossoms in their favorite movie or TV series. In Japan, the blooming of cherry blossoms represents the start of spring. Since they only bloom for a brief period, the Japanese celebrate the event by picnicking and holding blossom viewing parties. Cherry blossoms are called *sakura*, a term any anime fan knows well. *Card Captor Sakura*, anyone? ■ RB

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INSIDER NEWS+NOTES

TOYS' NIGHT OUT

Anime Ruled the 2003 New York Toy Fair

I WISH I COULD WEAR A SWIMSUIT LIKE THAT.
EVA-02

1
WHAT A HOSS!
2
3
4
2
5

TOYS ON PARADE (clockwise from left) Naru, Super Android 13, Kenshin, Zentraedi Armor, Zeta Gundam and Light-Up Trunks.

The best part about the continuing anime invasion? All the swag! At this year's New York International Toy Fair, where toy manufacturers reveal all of their products coming out for the year, you couldn't swing a dead cat without hitting some kind of swanky anime toy. We know, because we were there to swing dead cats! Since no one loves goodies and trinkets like anime fans, get ready to drool over what you'll be blowing your dough on for 2003:

BERSERK—Fans of the bloody, mega-violent anime may be able to quell their murderous rages after Toycom releases a six-figure PVC line, headed by Guts. **MAY**

DRAGON BALL—Goku's in the house! Now that Jakks Pacific has the *Dragon Ball* license, they plan to make figures in-scale with the regular *DBZ* toys! First up is Goku and Krillin and their tournament gis, a bulked-out Master Roshi, the Pirate Robot and General Blue. **SUMMER**

DRAGON BALL Z —The Buu Saga gets its due from Jakks, with Series 12–Mystic Gohan, Tien, Vegito, Super Buu and Super Saiyan Gotenks—slated this summer, with two-packs to follow. The IF-Labs 9-inch series continues in the fall, with Android 13, Super Android 13 **[2]**, Future Trunks and Vegeta. Those partial to the tinier side need only look to Toynami, whose mini-figures' hair lights up Saiyan-style when placed on their bases. **SUMMER**

EVANGELION—Maybe there's only one new figure—the super-articulated movie version of Asuka's EVA-02 robot—but *Eva* fans can still score statues of Rei and Asuka in the pilot plug suits and swimwear, all imported from Diamond. **SUMMER**

GUNDAM—Not only is Bandai giving us a whole slew of figures from *Zeta Gundam* **[5]**, the Battle-Scarred series continues with *Gundam Wing*'s Wing Zero Custom, while their superlative, super-articulated 7.5-inch Archenemies series continues with Amuro Ray's original RX-78 Gundam and a Gelgoog. **FALL**

LOVE HINA—Actually, it's *Love Hina Again*, the sequel to the hit series. Six sexy girls in swimsuits get the small PVC figure treatment from Toycom: Naru **[1]**, Kaolla, Misune, Shinobu, Kaolla and the mysterious Kanoko. **MAY**

ROBOTECH—Robogoodness abounds from Toynami. The Zentraedi finally get their due with Power Armor figures **[4]**, and the Destroids to fight'em. The high-end Masterpiece series continues with the *Next Generation*'s Alpha Fighters, and their Cyclones and Alpha's get I-Men to boot. **SUMMER**

SAMURAI X—Otherwise known as *Rurouni Kenshin* (now on Cartoon Network), expect Toycom's six-figure PVC set to have fans dueling to get Kenshin **[3]**, Sanosuke, Hajime, Kaoru and Yahiko. **MAY**

SUPERIOR DEFENDER—Take bad-ass robots, throw in *Hello Kitty* and blend—you get *Superior Defender*. You'll also get figures of the three heroic robots, and the evil Dark Axis, from Bandai. **FALL**

ULTIMATE MUSCLE—Take it to the ring with more 6-inch figures, including Checkmate, Mars and Wally Tusket; take it higher with 12-inch figures of the Muscle League's finest, or battle your mini-figures in the Battle Ring! **JULY**

VAMPIRE HUNTER D—Get a shot of vitamin D with a 12-inch, cloth-outfitted vampire hunter, straight from Japan, thanks to Epoch. **MAY**

YU YU HAKUSHO—No word on what figures are coming first, but Jakks has a 5-inch series planned for Toonami's latest hit. **FALL** ■ Robert Bricken

DEATH OF THE MONTH

COUNT CAGLIOSTRO FROM "LUPIN III: CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO"

Poor Count Cagliostro—it really just isn't his day. Not only did Lupin the 3rd escape from his dungeons and set fire to his castle, but Inspector Zenigata also uncovered his massive, worldwide counterfeiting ring on live television. Worse still, Lupin has the Cagliostro heirloom ring which is supposed to unlock the treasure of Cagliostro! So it's not surprising the Count is a little ticked-off. He chases Lupin through the giant, Big Ben-esque clock tower overlooking the lake, trying to skewer him with a sword amid huge gears. Cagliostro finally catches up to him on the hands of the clock itself—and forces Lupin to give him the ring, which greedily inserts into the clock face.

However, this causes the clock to reset to midnight—with Cagliostro in the middle—and crushes the Count in-between the gigantic hands, and making a permanent stain at 12 o'clock. Time just wasn't on his side... ■ Miguel A.E. Betita

ERG... DARN DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME!
CAGLIOSTRO

RISING FUN

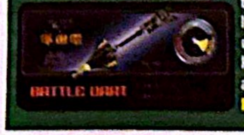
WHAT'S HOT IN JAPAN RIGHT NOW?

MOVIES The seemingly invincible cash cow *One Piece*—whose manga is currently wowing America in *Shonen Jump*—makes its annual return to theaters in "The Dead End Adventure." This time around Luffy and his pirate friends enter a race for a big cash prize and end up having to compete against giants and sea people. Sounds like another day at the office for the *One Piece* crew.

VIDEO GAMES The *Dynasty Warriors* series has a devoted, if small, fan-following over here, but in Japan it's nearly an obsession, selling over a million copies in nine days. *Dynasty Warriors 4*—which continues the series' pitting the player and his bodyguards against an entire army—continues the formula, but with more magic and siege weapons.

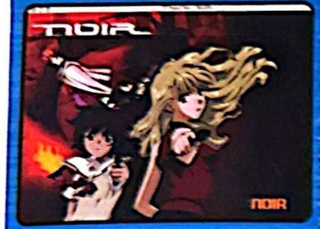
TV The end of the Japanese TV mid-season means that many hot TV shows will be coming to end, including the wildly popular *Overman King Gainer* about humans in the future living in the Siberian tundra and being policed by mecha.

TOYS Quite possibly the deadliest toy to ever be put into the hands of a child, Bandai's Battle Darts is gaining such a strong following that it is already hosting regular tournaments. The cool dart designs and back-story (!) are keeping kids' interest while avoiding nasty eye injuries. ■ Kumar Sivasubramanian

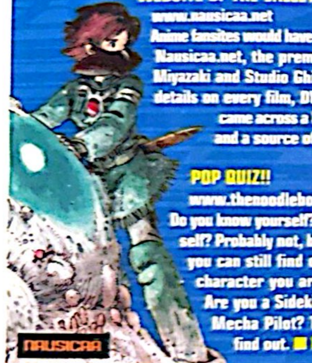


INTERFACE

THE BEST NONSENSE ON THE 'NET



OFFICIAL 'NOIR' SITE
www.projectnoir.com
If you can't get enough of the two lovely killers-for-hire, then all you need to do is cast your 'net browser here. Chock full of character bios, design art, weapon stats and an episode guide—with plenty of goodies like trailers, wallpapers and more. Visit, or find yourself on the hit list.

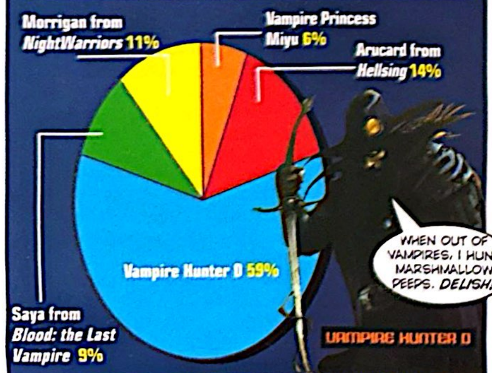


WEBSITE OF THE VALLEY OF WIND
www.nausicaa.net
Anime fansites would have to do a lot to be better than Nausicaa.net, the premiere fansite for all Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli news and info. Full of details on every film, DVD, side project that ever came across a Ghibli disk, the site is pretty and a source of up-to-the-second news.

POP QUIZ!!
www.thenoodlebowl.com/oav/quiz1.html
Do you know yourself? Do you *really* know yourself? Probably not, but that's alright, because you can still find out which generic anime character you are with this helpful quiz. Are you a Sidekick? A Mascot? Maybe a Mecha Pilot? There's only one way to find out. ■ RB

POLL

WHO IS THE COOLEST ANIME VAMPIRE?



CAST YOUR VOTE IN OUR LATEST POLL AT WIZARDUNIVERSE.COM!

SUPER DIMENSIONAL POP STAR

The Voice Behind *Macross*'s Minmay is Back!

MARI IIJIMA

Do you remember love? Mari Iijima sure does, and she's counting on the fact that anime fans will, too. The voice behind the anime's most famous idol singer Lynn Minmay—star of the classic series *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross*, better known in America as the first saga of *Robotech*—Iijima has recorded fresh renditions of her pre-eminent character's best-loved music, including "Do You Remember Love," "My Boyfriend is a Pilot" and more on her new CD, aptly named *Mari Iijima Sings Lynn Minmay*.

After trying to disassociate herself with her best-known role, Iijima has clearly come to terms with the drawbacks of voicing an anime idol. "Too many people recognized me as Minmay, and for a long time—maybe [illegible] seven years—I didn't sing it during my concerts," says Iijima. "But after I started to perform in the United States [illegible] animation conventions, I began to feel okay about it."

The CD takes the premise that Minmay herself wrote most of the music. "Minmay has lived [illegible] me for the last 20 years, so it wasn't hard to express her feelings," explains the diminutive singer/songwriter. "I actually got the idea from a Japanese friend, who suggested that I co-write a song with Minmay."

From that idea eventually came this CD, Iijima's tribute to the character who made her a star to millions of anime fans. "It was time for me to show love and respect for Minmay," she claims. "This album is like a big thank-you note." *Macross* and *Robotech* fans will likely thank her by importing the CD, available now. ■ Jeff Berkwits

I'D LIKE TO THANK *REVLON* AND THEIR *FABULOUS* CURLING IRON!

TEEN IDLE Anime pop star supreme Minmay finds time to belt out a song in-between tormenting pilots' hearts.

SAVING THE EARTH BY ANIME

A.I. Gets Inside 'Escaflowne' and 'Arjuna' Creator Shoji Kawamori's Head

Shoji Kawamori is one of the most important men in anime. He's created countless titles, many of which like *Macross Plus* and *Escaflowne* have come to be regarded as anime classics. Kawamori-san took a little time to talk about *Arjuna*, his latest release to hit America, his philosophy of anime and what he has in store.

WHAT INSPIRED YOUR CREATION OF ARJUNA?

One of the ideas came from the Bhagavad-Gita, an ancient Hindu religious text. In one episode, an archery master named Prince Arjuna goes to a place where an intense battle is taking place. However, Krishna, the avatar of god, appears before him. They start an interesting conversation about the human soul, spirits and the way of life, time, karma, and space. It was so profound that I was deeply inspired by it.

WOW, THAT'S DEEP! BUT ISN'T ARJUNA MORE ECOLOGICALLY-MINDED THAN RELIGIOUS?

Well, I also felt that the situation of his enemies being those that are close to *Arjuna* was very similar to the Earth's ecosystem being damaged by the advancement of various technologies. There is no enemy or an assailant who is damaging our home planet; it is us who are damaging the Earth by consuming an enormous amount of energy and materials.

WHY DID YOU CHANGE THE LEGEND FROM A PRINCE TO PRINCESS?

In modern times, I felt that young girls are more energetic than boys, especially in Japan. And in my opinion, I believe that many conflicts such as wars cannot be solved only by strength, which is basically a male principle. I was also able to add an element of a love story by changing the main character to a girl.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE WHILE IN PRODUCTION OF ARJUNA?

My biggest challenge was on how to visualize the ideological elements such as consciousness, soul, and language. From a technical point of view, since CG was rarely used on TV series at the time in Japan—and even if it was used it was mainly for the mechas—I decided to use it on characters such as Juna and Tokio, living things such as birds and plants, and on natural phenomena. My challenge was matching the CG to the 2D animation.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO WORK WITH MUSIC COMPOSER YOKO KANNO?

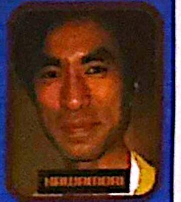
I have worked with Ms. Kanno since *Macross Plus* and *Escaflowne*, and I am very pleased because she is able to compose music that fits the personality of each show. She always creates songs from an unexpected and refreshing point of view so I have a lot of fun trying to match her music to the different scenes. I get excited whenever a song that didn't seem to fit at first later synchronizes perfectly with the scene.

JUNA, GETS HER POWERS FROM A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE. HAVE YOU HAD ONE?

Unfortunately, I have not had such an experience yet. But I heard that there are research facilities in America that generate artificial near-death experiences so I would like to try it once. ■ Jennifer M. Contino

VITAL STATS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SHOJI KAWAMORI



BIRTHDATE August 21,1959
ZODIAC SIGNS Leo, but in Chinese astrology, he's from the Year of the Pig, known for their intelligence and generous natures.
FUN EDUCATIONAL FACT Kawamori dropped out of his mechanical engineering college courses to work for Studio Nue
FAVORITE NON-ANIME SHOW *Thunderbirds*
LEAST FAVORITE NON-ANIME SHOW *Ultraman*

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

MACROSS (1982) The penultimate space epic love story that became the first part of the *Robotech* saga.
MACROSS PLUS (1994) Both a four-part OAV and a movie, Kawamori actually rode in fighter planes at Edwards Air Force base for "research."
ESCAFLOWNE: THE MOVIE (2000) High school student Hitomi wishes she could disappear off the face of the earth and gets more than she bargained for.

CURRENT PROJECT

MACROSS ZERO Prequel to the original *Macross* saga, this new series takes a look at the days leading up to the Zentran (called the Zentraedi in *Robotech*) invasion that launched the SDF into space. Roy Fokker returns as the leader of the first Valkyrie squadron. ■ Trisha L. Sebastian

BY TRISHA L. SEBASTIAN

A.I. FIVE

THE TOP 5 REASONS YOU'LL LOVE THIS SERIES

READ OR DIE

THE FATE OF THE WORLD RESTS IN THE HANDS OF...A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER?

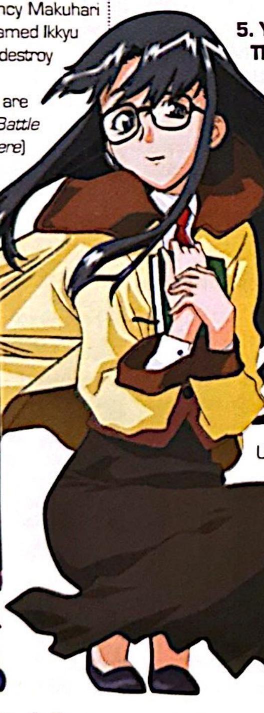
Everyone knows libraries are quiet, dusty places you stop going to after school forced you to. They're full of people burying their noses in books, ignoring the world around them, getting their thrills from avoiding late fees.

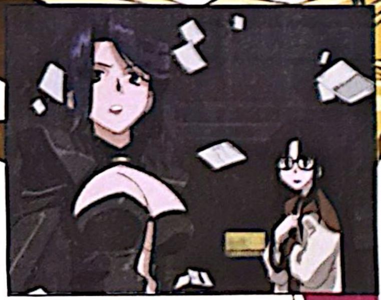
Except for those with mystical, paramilitary strike teams in the basement, that is.

For hidden deep in the bowels of the British Library is a high-tech special forces team working to keep the world safe from literary evils. Using special powers and sophisticated weaponry, book-loving substitute teacher Yomiko Readman (a.k.a. The Paper) and secret hottie agent Nancy Makuhari (Miss Deep) are on a race to stop a madman named Ikkyu before his clones of famous historical figures can destroy the human race!

Manga Entertainment and Gaijin Productions are bringing *Read or Die*, writer Hideyuki Kurata's (*Battle Athletes Victory* and *Now and Then, Here and There*) offbeat battle/books adventure to America, but if you think the tale is a little too kooky for you, Manga Entertainment product manager Mark Perrier can spell out why you're wrong. "There are no hidden messages in *Read or Die*, or statements about the state of human existence," teases Perrier. "Instead of rendering the end product flat or meaningless, there's sheer joy in watching the world they've brought to life. It's a testament to Kurata's abilities."

The single volume collecting the three OAV episodes will be released on DVD on May 27, including extras like an interview with Kurata, character designer Masashi Ishihama and director Koji Masunari. But why should you take a look? Here are a few reasons:





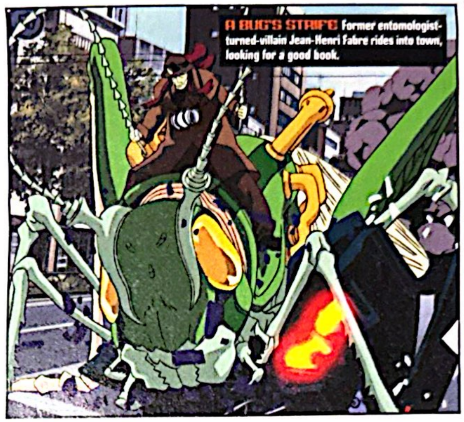
BOOK SMARTS Don't judge Yomiko Readman (seen above with Miss Deep) by her cover—or she'll cut ya!

5. YOU'LL GET DOWN TO THE MUSIC!

In the grand style of a James Bond film, the opening sequence is filled with a funky jazz beat that accompanies lush imagery. Thanks to composer Taku Iwasaki (*Rurouni Kenshin*), each episode contains sweeping musical themes reminiscent of the best international spy thriller movies. Anime music hasn't sounded this cool since *Cowboy Bebop*.

4. HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE BATTLES FOUGHT WITH PAPER PRODUCTS?

Using CGI with hand-drawn animation, you sweep through New York on a gigantic paper airplane, run from the fury of the Ganges River, and climb aboard a gigantic floating fortress—all of it thanks to Yomiko's ability to manipulate paper to her will. And if that isn't enough for you, watching Yomiko square off against the villains armed only with paper and the different weapons she can create (see sidebar for some of 'em) makes for the most imaginative, bizarre battles ever seen in anime!



A BUG'S STRIFE former entomologist-turned-villain Jean-Henri Fabre rides into town, looking for a good book.

3. LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU MAY LEARN SOMETHING

If you're the kind of fan who likes to learn as they watch anime, *Read or Die* is the title for you! All of the villains are actually famous scientists, musicians, philosophers and explorers, like main villain Ikkyu, a fourteenth century monk whose philosophy can be summed up as thus: "How stupid can people be?" Or Otto Lilienthal, the German "Glider King," who would have been the first person in flight had he not died in a glider crash in 1896. The original Son Goku (that name a little familiar?) from the literary classic *Journey to the West* also makes an appearance. This makes it a great anime for kids, too.

2. SUDDENLY, WE BOOKISH TYPES GET MORE RESPECT

Yomiko Readman is the kind of girl that everyone knows and likes. She's a little clumsy and she likes to read, making her a normal, average girl. Regardless of her amazing powers, she exudes a charming aura of normality, somehow more appealing than Miss Deep's voluptuous beauty. It's Yomiko's average girl demeanor, all-too-realistic reading obsession and utterly sweet goofiness that will win your heart. Awww.

1. YOU MAY GET A NEW APPRECIATION FOR (GASP) LIBRARIES

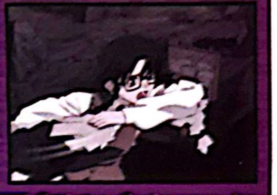
Your image of the quiet bespectacled librarian who spends all day shushing people and sorting books will be tarnished forever once you get a look at the talented folks at the British Library, and you'll be better for it. You'll drool over their high-tech spy equipment and connections to all the international secret agencies' spy satellites and operatives around the world. Betcha won't ever duck those late fees again, buddy!

Associate Editor Trisha Sebastian's late fees at the local library total $13,291.47, and they want it now.

THE PAPER'S CUTS

SHE SLICES! SHE DICES! SHE MAKES PAPER AIRPLANES!

If you had the power to control the density and thickness of paper, what would you do? We know it's not the most normal superpower, but you'd be surprised what you can accomplish! Here's a list of the most impressive ways Yomiko Readman (a.k.a. The Paper) uses her powers.

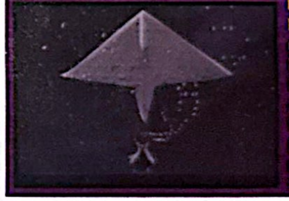


SHURIKEN INDEX CARDS (right): Yomiko always has a few of these handy in her suitcase or her pockets, and can throw them with pinpoint accuracy. They can also be used as hand-held fighting knives.

BULLET-PROOF INDEX CARDS: Not just an offensive weapon, her index cards can stop bullets fired at point blank range, and be used as shields for parrying and defense.

HAIR-TIE STILETTO KNIFE: From a hair-tie, Yomiko finds the right ingredients for a stiletto knife. When thrown, it can easily slice through metal—perfect for when you've been handcuffed.

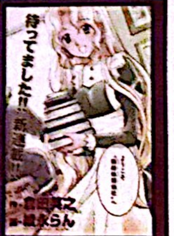
KATANA MADE OF MONEY: Drake may not be so happy to learn that the paper money he lent her gets turned into a parrying staff. Once the action becomes more intense, she morphs it into a katana!



GIGANTIC PAPER AIRPLANE (left): Villain getting away by air? It's no problem for The Paper, who uses all the paper in her suitcase to form a gigantic paper airplane, complete with tail for steering. ■ TS

'DREAM' ON

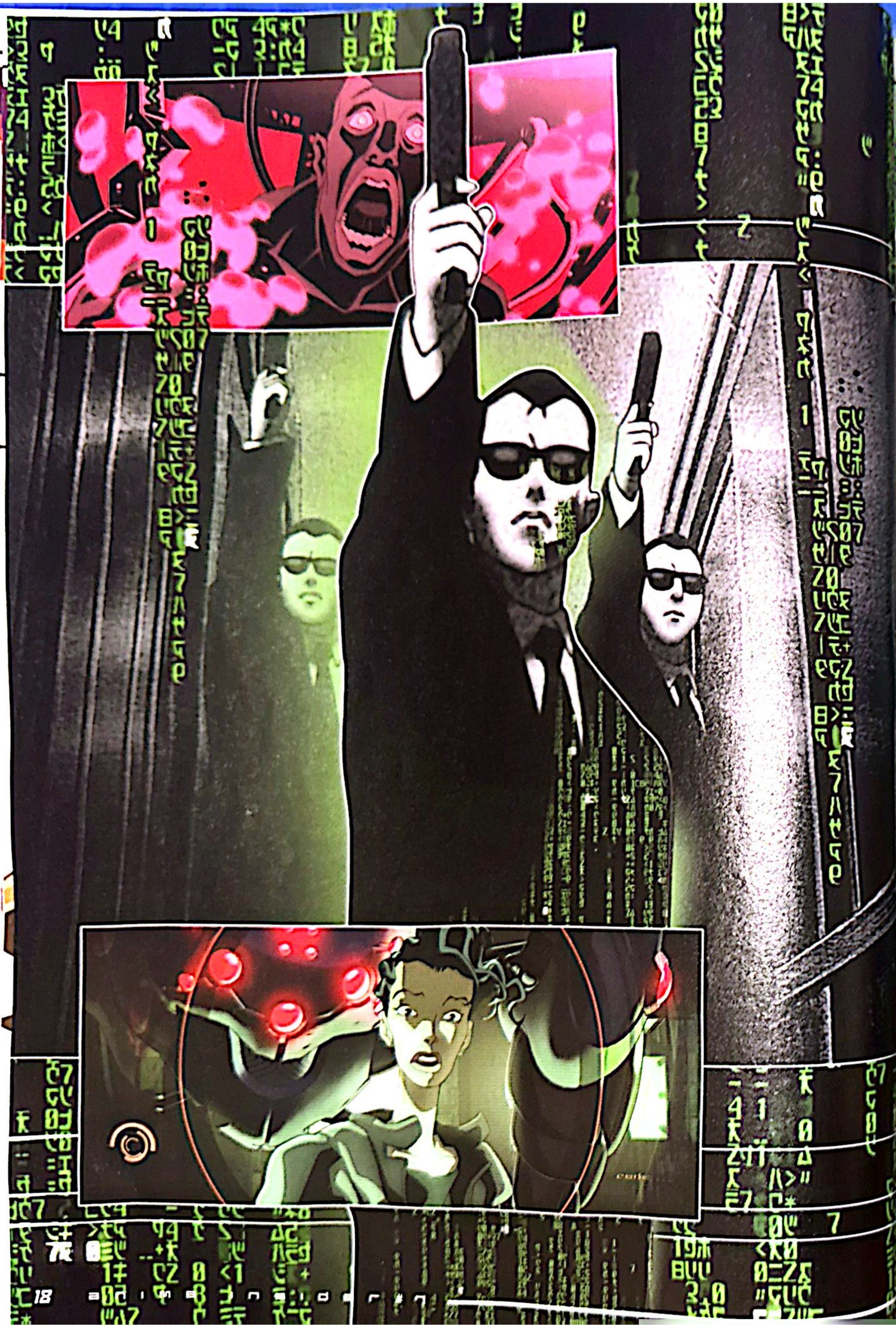
KEEP READING—'READ OR DIE' CONTINUES!



If you've finished the Read or Die OAV series and you can't get enough of the universe Hideyuki Kurata created, you're in luck. In November 2002, Sony Music announced that they would be working on a TV series based on the manga sequel called *Shin Read or Die*—which means *New Read or Die*, but is most often referred to as *Read or Dream*.

Read or Dream is the story of three girls—sisters of Yomiko—named Michelle, Maggie and Anita who are Paper Masters as well, and also agents for the Royal British Library as well. Although the series has a cuter look to it, it is being made by the same staff who made the *Read or Die* anime. Though Yomiko Readman does not appear in the manga, creator Hideyuki Kurata has neither confirmed nor denied that she will not appear in the anime series.

Read or Dream is currently being serialized in Ultra Jump, written by Hideyuki Kurata and drawn by doujinshi artist Ran Ayanaga. The TV series is scheduled to premiere in Japan later this year. ■ TS



WHAT IS THE ANIMATRIX?

MOVE OVER, KEANU. THE STORY OF 'THE MATRIX' MUST CONTINUE, AND ONLY ANIME CAN TELL IT

"Andy and Larry love anime."

Does that statement mean anything to you? It should. While there are plenty of Andys and Larrys to go around, these are the ones that created Warner Brothers' mega-sci-fi blockbuster *The Matrix*.

"The Wachowski brothers always wanted to do *Matrix* anime," Joel Silver, the producer of *The Matrix*—and its two upcoming sequels, *Reloaded* and *Revolutions*—continues to explain. "They felt this was a good way to enhance the movie experience by adding more content."

"This" refers to *The Animatrix*—a series of nine short anime films set in The Matrix universe—created by some of the top Japanese anime artists working today. It was a very ambitious project, but one that Andy and Larry Wachowski, the brothers who wrote and directed the three films, were determined to construct in order to expand their vision of the world of *The Matrix* way beyond just the big screen moviegoing experience.

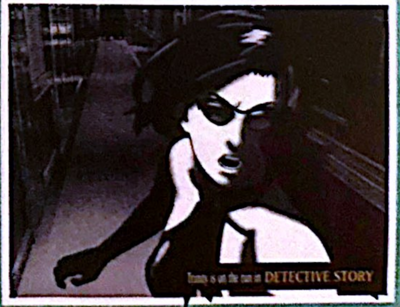
"Andy and Larry decided that they wanted to do *Animatrix* about the same time they started talking about expanding their vision into other media," co-producer Michael Arias says. "The influence of anime on their films is pretty obvious. And there's certainly lots of stuff that we could do with *Animatrix* that they wouldn't have been able to do within the framework of a feature film, even ones as far out as the Matrix films."

So the ambitious anime project began three years ago, with a goal to create a DVD that would release in conjunction with *The Matrix Reloaded*. (*The Animatrix* DVD/video arrives in stores on June 3; *The Matrix Reloaded* opens in theaters May 15.) The Wachowski brothers penned four of the nine scripts themselves.

"I asked Andy and Larry early on to provide stories—one, two, however many possible—in order to not only jumpstart the project, but also to serve as a template, an example of the kind of material that they expected from the Japanese anime directors who would eventually end up doing original stories," explains Arias.

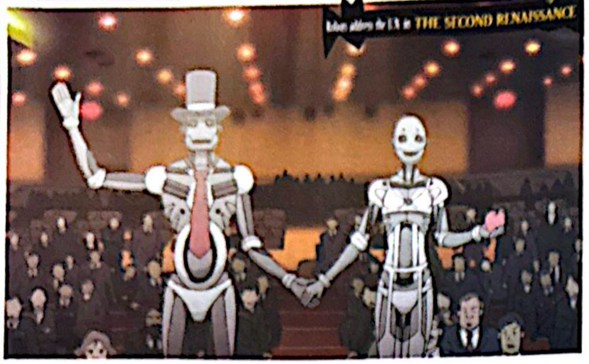
The brothers actually had a hand in all nine of the anime shorts (each runs about ten minutes), beginning with choosing the animators who would bring the stories to life. "To choose the artists, Eiko Tanaka, Hiroaki Takeuchi, and I [the three producers based in Japan] made a long list of all the artists we'd want to get involved, many of them already friends or professional acquaintances," Michael Arias remembers. "We then reviewed the list with Andy and Larry. They're very familiar with a great deal of anime, so they knew many of the artists on the list by name or through their work." Andy and Larry Wachowski, while providing the framework and having final say over the storyboards that preceded the actual animation, "gave everyone an amazing amount of freedom in choosing subject matter and approach," according to Arias.

The result is an eclectic mix of anime from some of the top animators working in the field today. Read on for an inside look at each episode.



Trinity is on the run in DETECTIVE STORY

BY JENNY PETERS



Robots address the U.N. in THE SECOND RENAISSANCE

THE SECOND RENAISSANCE (Part I and Part II)

(Studio4ºC, Tokyo)
Written by Andy and Larry Wachowski, directed by Mahiro Maeda

Enter the Zion archives with this two-part episode that reveals the beginning of the Matrix, telling the story of humanity's ultimate downfall to the power of the machines.

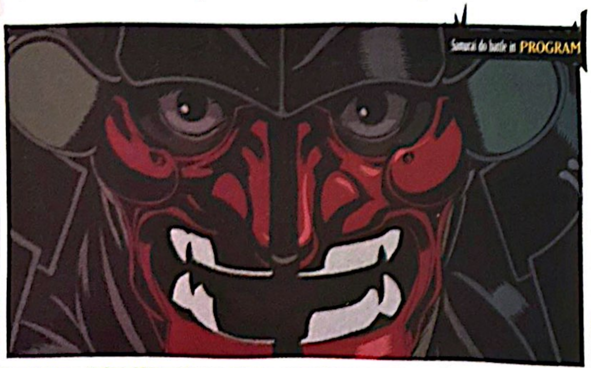
"I had always wanted to work on something based on a script from Hollywood," says Mahiro Maeda, who is best known for his anime series *Blue Submarine No. 6*. Maeda admits that the biggest challenge of creating these two key episodes was to create an interesting story without a main character.

"It's mainly a documentary, there's no story, and no drama," he moans. "Without a main character, how am I going to tell the story?" Maeda realized that he needed to look to the world around him for inspiration if he was going to succeed in creating an anime universe that would be acceptable to his bosses.

"It was tough work," Maeda admits. "I decided to look at what man has built, and also what man has destroyed. To look at the way cities are built, the way cities are destroyed—at the history of the 20th century." To that end, he focused on the mandala as a symbol of world unity, and also used a wide variety of animation techniques.

The first episode has been available for free viewing on the *Animatrix* website [www.intothematrix.com] since February 2003.

The second movie begins in OSIRIS



Samurai do battle in PROGRAM

PROGRAM

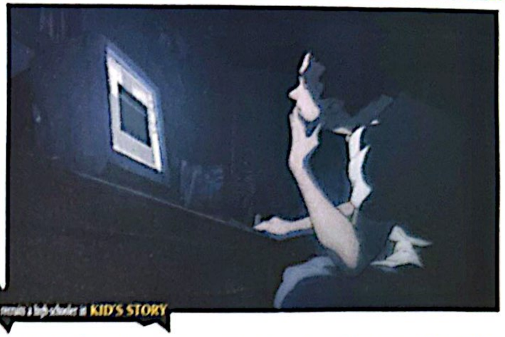
(Madhouse Studios, Tokyo)
Written and directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri

Taking the concept of training simulations one step farther than in *The Matrix*, writer-director Yoshiaki Kawajiri (*Wicked City*, *Vampire Hunter D*) offers a vision of a female soldier of Zion who is forced to choose between her lover and the resistance. Kawajiri's gorgeous anime of the battle between two Samurai warriors (CIS, the heroine, against her former lover) ultimately expresses the seductive nature of the Matrix; Kawajiri's conceit is one that the Wachowski brothers embraced wholeheartedly. "They felt Kawajiri's story developed a facet of the Matrix that they wanted to explore further," says producer Michael Arias. Bonus: Kawajiri got to play a small role in *The Matrix Revolutions* for his efforts! That episode has been available on the website since March 2003.

FINAL FLIGHT OF THE OSIRIS

(Square USA, Inc.)
Written by Andy and Larry Wachowski, directed by Andy Jones

"This one directly sets up the second movie, and this was always the intention," says Joel Silver, explaining why "Final Flight" was theatrically released in March as a short before *Dreamcatcher*. This "most sophisticated and most costly of the anime" tells the story of the crew of the hovercraft Osiris, who must get a message back to Zion while fighting off an armada of Sentinels—machines bent on stopping the human crew from fulfilling their mission. American animator Andy Jones and Squaresoft, of *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* fame, took their ultra-naturalistic style to a new level for this bridge between the first and second films. "The Wachowski Brothers sort of sought us out. They really liked the style that we developed, and thought that it'd be the perfect medium to tell this story that relates so closely to the live-action films," he says.



Neo recruits a high-schooler in KID'S STORY

KID'S STORY

(Studio4ºC, Tokyo)
Written by Andy and Larry Wachowski, directed by Shinichiro Watanabe

Cowboy Bebop creator/director Shinichiro Watanabe got two chances to put his stamp on *The Animatrix*. The first tells the story of a high school boy who gets a personal invitation from an unseen Neo (actually voiced by Keanu Reeves) to escape from the Matrix (watch for that same character as "The Kid" in *The Matrix Reloaded*). "I was very excited about the job," Watanabe remembers. A huge fan of American movies, Watanabe jumped at the chance to put his unique stamp on one of the *Animatrix* episodes. "At first, I was just asked to do 'Kid's Story,'" he says, "and I was very interested in the ambiguity of the reality and non-reality that is the core of *The Matrix*." And while the director admits that he has "lots of sort of horrible stories I could tell" about the process of dealing with the Hollywood movie machine for the first time, he insists he is ultimately happy that he "learned about the Hollywood-style" firsthand.

DETECTIVE STORY

(Studio4ºC, Tokyo)
Written and directed by Shinichiro Watanabe

Watanabe's second episode is completely different than "Kid's Story." Told in a classic film noir style, it is the tale of a hard-boiled private investigator (think Philip Marlowe), who inadvertently ends up on the trail of Trinity (the only original *Matrix* character who appears in *The Animatrix*) and gets mixed up in more than he bargained for—much more. "When 'Kid's Story' was just about finished, they asked me to do another one," Watanabe says, but the time constraints necessitated the look and action of this one. "For 'Detective Story,' there really was no time," he explains. "So the only thing I figured

VIRTUAL REALITIES

BETWEEN *THE MATRIX* AND *.hack*, WHICH WORLD IS REAL?

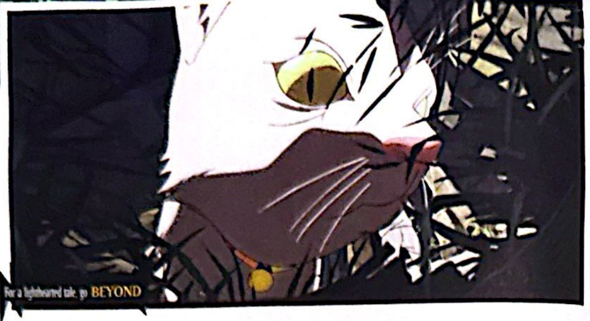
THE MATRIX

.hack

	THE MATRIX	.hack
VIRTUAL REALITY	Humans live in a virtual world that's as real as can be, created by maniacal computers.	Humans play in a virtual world that's as real as can be, created by maniacal computer programmers.
SKEPTICAL HERO	Neo breaks free from his daily routine to discover that the world isn't what he thought it was.	Tsukasa breaks free from his daily routine to discover that The World isn't what he thought it was.
HOT HEROINE	Butt-kicking babe in tight vinyl, Triniy, helps hero dispatch evil Agents.	Butt-kicking babe in tight battle bikini, Mimiru, helps hero dispatch evil monsters.
THE ONE	Neo, having been disillusioned by Morpheus as to the true nature of things, is the only one who can save humanity.	Tsukasa, having been disillusioned by Aura as to the true nature of things, is the only one who can save The World.
SUPER-POWERS	Neo, having realized he's The One, takes out a couple of Agents, reducing them to a few lines of Matrix code.	Tsukasa, having obtained special powers, takes out an administrator, reducing him to a few lines of The World code.

—— BY ZAC BERTSCHY ——

was to let me do the 'Detective' in a very Japanese style." This episode has been available on the website since April 2003.

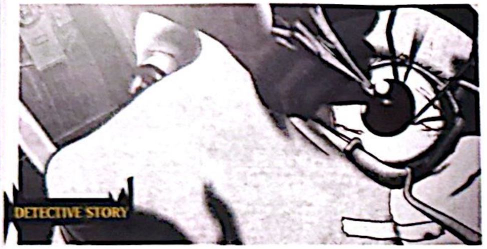

For a lighthearted tale, go BEYOND

WORLD RECORD

(Madhouse Studios, Tokyo)

Written by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, directed by Takeshi Koike

An intense vision of one athlete's desperate attempt to break a world sprinting record at the same time he breaks out of the constricts of the Matrix. "I am really interested in motion, in fluid motion, and the feeling involved in motion," Koike explains. "So this was a really great format to show my work." To that end, Koike created a unique vision of sinews and strain, an extremely distinctive work of anime set within the framework of *The Matrix*. "I didn't adjust my style at all for the American audience. I just did exactly what I wanted to, and used the extent of my imagination."

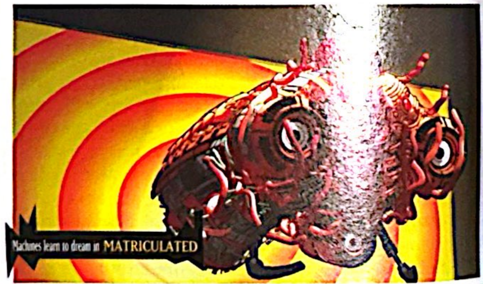

DETECTIVE STORY

BEYOND

(Studio4°C, Tokyo)

Written and directed by Koji Morimoto

Perhaps the most traditional anime episode of *The Animatrix*, "Beyond" poses the question of what if the Japanese people were plugged into the Matrix? It answers it with a vision of a typical Japanese city of the late 20th century, and focuses on a group of kids that find an old house with a strange twist—a funny bug in the Matrix programming—but the kids are stuck inside when the "exterminators" come. It is a lighthearted episode, created by *Robot Carnival* director Koji Morimoto, who admits the process was anything but simple. "There's been lots of problems along the way," he reveals. "I worked on several scripts for about eight months and drew artwork for about three different sets of storyboards." Despite the repeated revisions, Morimoto says the experience was actually a good one. "It was nice to really take our time and do the work right. That's usually not the style that we work in!"

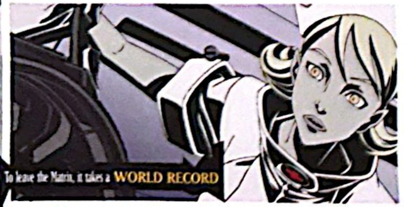

Machines learn to dream in MATRICULATED

MATRICULATED (DNA, Seoul)

Written and directed by Peter Chung

Aeon Flux and *Reign the Conqueror* creator Peter Chung twists the Matrix on its head with his episode, by looking at it from the point of view of the machines. His creation is a world where the machines are converted to the side of the humans living outside the Matrix, by means of the enticement of the machine into the dreams of the humans. Sound complicated? It is, but Chung is sure that viewers will ultimately understand. "[illegible] first movie, human beings are living in a world created by machines. I wondered what would happen if a machine could be put inside a human dream? That was the basic premise of my story," he says.

Los Angeles-based freelance writer Jenny Peters won't stop taking the red pill, no matter how concerned her friends and family are.


To leave the Matrix, it takes a WORLD RECORD

GAME BOY ADVANCE
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
So... you want to be a Superhero.
Have you got what it takes?
Uncluttered cranium. No unneccessary thoughts which may distract one from performing their heroic deeds.
Attire. You won't find a "HeroWear for Men SuperStore" at your local shopping mall.
Brawn. No self-respecting Superhero would be seen without it.
ULTIMATE MUSCLE
THE KINNIKUMAN LEGACY
Nintendo GameCube. Chick magnet.
Game Boy® Advance. 'Cause, what if you get stuck on a bus in traffic?
Strong bones. If you've ever had a 600lb walrus on you then you'd know why.
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Violence
Comfy boots. You'll be on your feet all day. Don't take good footwear for granted.
CATCH IT ON THE FOX BOX
BANDAI
KID MUSCLE GOES FOR THE KO!
Wrestling.
THE PATH OF THE SUPERHERO
LEGENDS VS NEW GENERATION
(Hardcore).

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FISTS OF FURY

BY ROBERT BRICKEN

BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE ULTIMATE POWER LEVEL GUIDE TO 'DRAGON BALL' AND 'DBZ'!

POWER.

They say it corrupts; if that were true, the stars of *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* would be the most evil fictional characters ever created.

Luckily, the saying isn't totally accurate. While evil bad guys abound in the DB universe, the heroic Goku and the Z Warriors are always there to stop them. And despite the fact they have enough power to blow up the planet, they always use those powers to stop those who try.

Power is such an important aspect of the Dragon Ball mythos—it seems no matter how powerful Goku gets, there's always a new alien or android that could take him out—but then Goku always returns, stronger than ever, to trounce him. The way folks keep track of this is by their Power Levels—an energy reading that accounts for their fighting power, including strength, speed and even technique. It appears with Frieza's minions at the beginning of *Dragon Ball Z*—but it disappears after Frieza is destroyed, and it's never used at all in the original *Dragon Ball* series.

But folks want to know: How powerful is Goku when he's a little kid? How powerful do Trunks and Goten get when they Fuse? Could Mystic Gohan take out Majin Vegeta? Could Hercule beat anybody?

The fans have been estimating and extrapolating for years, but we've done the research, analyzed the episodes and even dusted off our College Algebra notes (math is hard!) to create the definitive power level guide to all of Dragon Ball (except GT—we dare you to figure that one out). Now power up!

Scanned with CamScanner

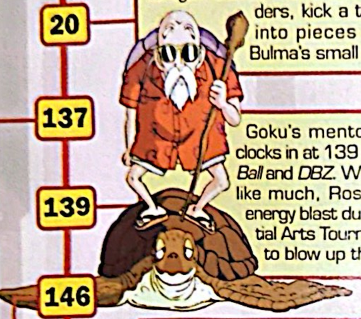
POWER LEVELS 0-250

FROM AVERAGE JOE TO PICCOLO

5 This is you and me kids, just an average human being. Pitiful, eh? **Regular folks** like Bulma and Launch end up around 5-ish.

20 Li'l **Goku** ain't no baby! Even at 11 years old, the kid Bulma meets in the first episode of *Dragon Ball* can toss boulders, kick a tree into pieces and even pick up Bulma's small car. (P)

137 Ohhh yeah! When he's not pretending to be a hero, **Hercule** tops off here. Even though he's an idiot, he's actually pretty tough. He did win the World's Martial Arts Tournament—if only because the Z warriors didn't attend that year. (C, M)



139 Goku's mentor **Master Roshi** clocks in at 139 during all of *Dragon Ball* and *DBZ*. While it may not sound like much, Roshi's Kamehameha energy blast during the World Martial Arts Tournament was enough to blow up the entire moon!

146 "Kill you!" That's what's on the back of the evil assassin **Tao**'s jacket, and he means it. He was hired by the Red Ribbon Army to get the Dragon Ball from Goku, preferably over his dead body. His powerful Dodon Ray would have done it, too—except he hit Goku's own Dragon Ball, hidden in his shirt, instead. (R)

157 Water does a body good! When Tao beats him, **Goku** decides to climb the mythical Korin Tower. At the top is magical water that makes the drinker stronger, guarded by Korin, a mystical cat! He finally grabs it in three days—even though it took Master Roshi three years! Now, Goku can move so fast he leaves after-images of himself, confusing his opponents. (R)

186 Three eyes have it—have the power, as **Tien** shows. Taught by the evil Master Crane, Tien has the ability to make up to four clones of himself—but each clone only has a fraction of the original. (K)

200 Monkey means business! Even at his weakest, **Goku turns into a giant monkey** (a.k.a. the Oozaru form) at the sight of the full moon! He crushes the evil Emperor Pilaf's castle with ease, until Goku's friends manage to cut off his tail and he returns to normal. (P)

201 When **Piccolo** first shows up, he's a lean, green killing machine. Evil to the core, he kills Krillin and steals Goku's Dragon Balls! (K)

206 Goku's friend, **Krillin** usually just gets his butt kicked 'til Goku arrives, but here at the beginning of *DBZ*, he's the strongest regular human on the planet! (S)

SAGA GUIDE

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? SETTLE DOWN, THE ANSWERS ARE HERE

DRAGON BALL SAGAS

PILAF SAGA (P): Bulma meets innocent little Goku and explains the wish-granting powers of the Dragon Balls. Together they search them out, while the evil Emperor Pilaf and his minions hunt them, too.

RED RIBBON SAGA (R): Goku looks for his grandfather's four-star Dragon Ball, but the evil Red Ribbon army wants the Balls, too.

KING PICCOLO SAGA (K): The evil King Piccolo will stop at nothing to get the Dragon Balls—even if it means killing Goku's closest friends.

DRAGON BALL Z SAGAS

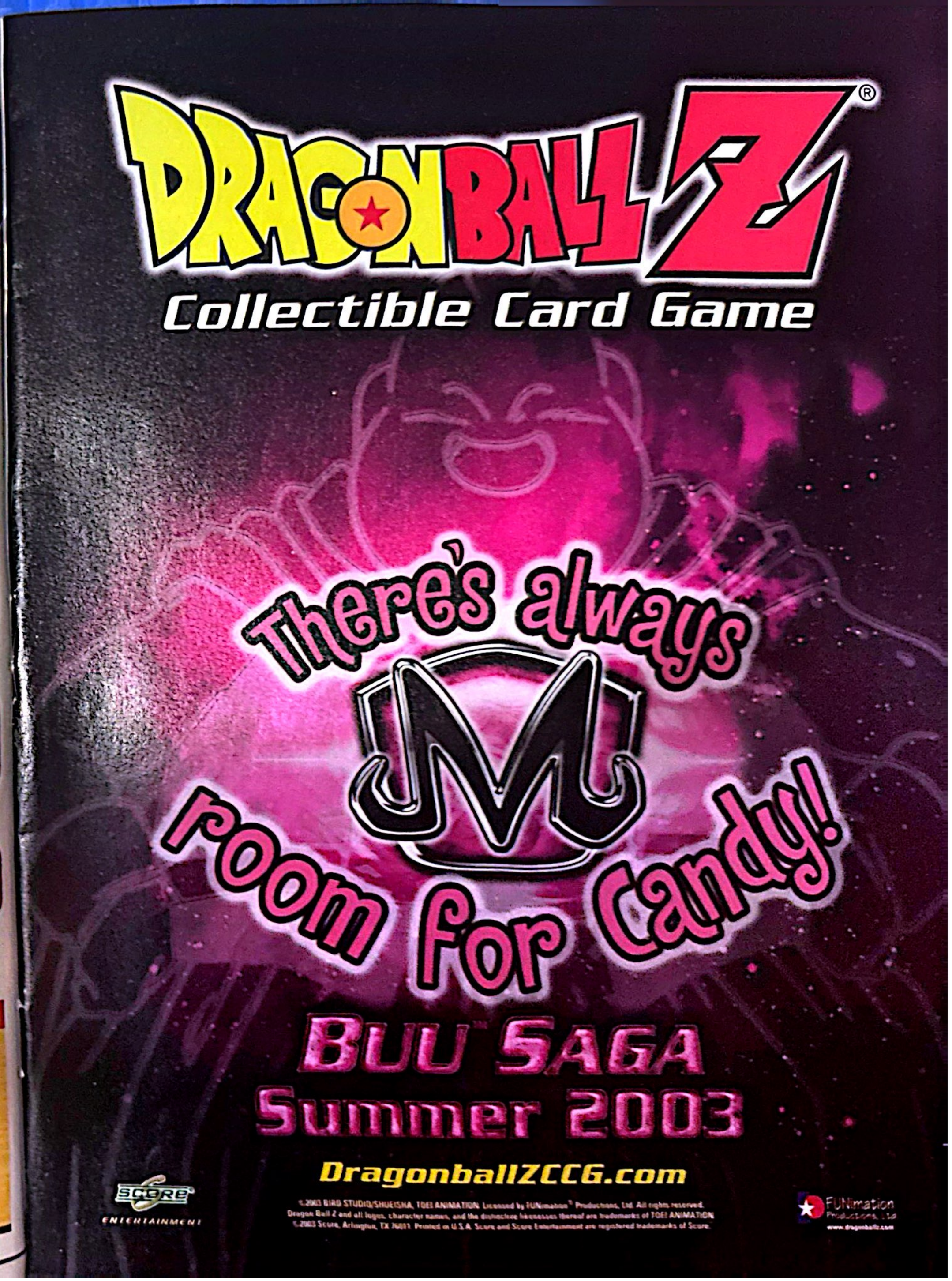
SAIYAN SAGA (S): Five years after Dragon Ball, Goku has a kid, Gohan, and a brother named Raditz, who tells him he's an alien called a Saiyan, and he was supposed to destroy the planet!

NAMEK SAGA (N): With Piccolo dead, the Dragon Balls are gone. Their search for more Balls (to bring their friends back to life) brings them to Frieza, destroyer of planets, who desires immortality!

ANDROID SAGA (A): After returning to Earth, a mysterious kid tells Goku that he is from the future, where two androids have ravaged the planet and killed everyone Goku loves.

CELL SAGA (C): A third android named Cell appears, and he's made of DNA from all of Earth's strongest fighters—including Goku! He holds games to battle the Z Warriors with the Earth at stake!

MAJIN BUU SAGA (M): Seven years later, while Gohan's trudging through high school, the wizard Babidi raises the malicious and indestructible entity known as Majin Buu. The Z Warriors fall one by one. ■ RB



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POWER LEVELS 251-100,000

WHY SAIYANS ARE SCARY

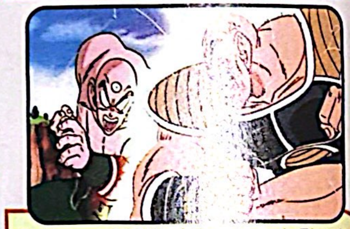
322 The clothes hide the man—that's why **Piccolo**, at the beginning of *DBZ*, has this low reading. In fact, he's wearing weighted clothes, which help him build strength and hide his power level—he's actually at 408! Hey, Goku does it, too! [S]

416 This is the strongest person in the world?! At the beginning of *DBZ*, **Goku** is a mere 416—and still the Earth's strongest warrior. But that's why when his evil brother Raditz arrives, he's able to down Goku with a single kick and steal his son, Gohan! [S]

1,200 Wake up Goku, your evil brother's here. As a trained Saiyan warrior, **Raditz**'s power level is unimaginable, even compared to Goku's. He can throw bullets at people—like the poor farmer who he first meets on Earth—faster than a gun can fire 'em! [S]

1,307 Baby on board! Although Goku's son, **Gohan**, seems like a regular little kid, he's a lot more. When Raditz has Goku and Piccolo nearly beat, a furious four-year-old Gohan goes ballistic and launches himself at Raditz, nearly impaling him with a super headbutt! [S]

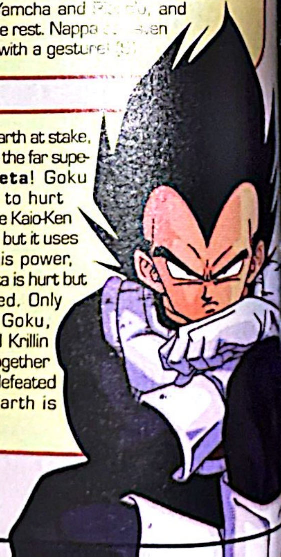
1,440 Luckily, **Piccolo**'s a straight shooter. While a wounded Goku holds down Raditz, Piccolo fires his Special Beam Cannon—upping his attack power and killing Raditz and Goku both! [S]



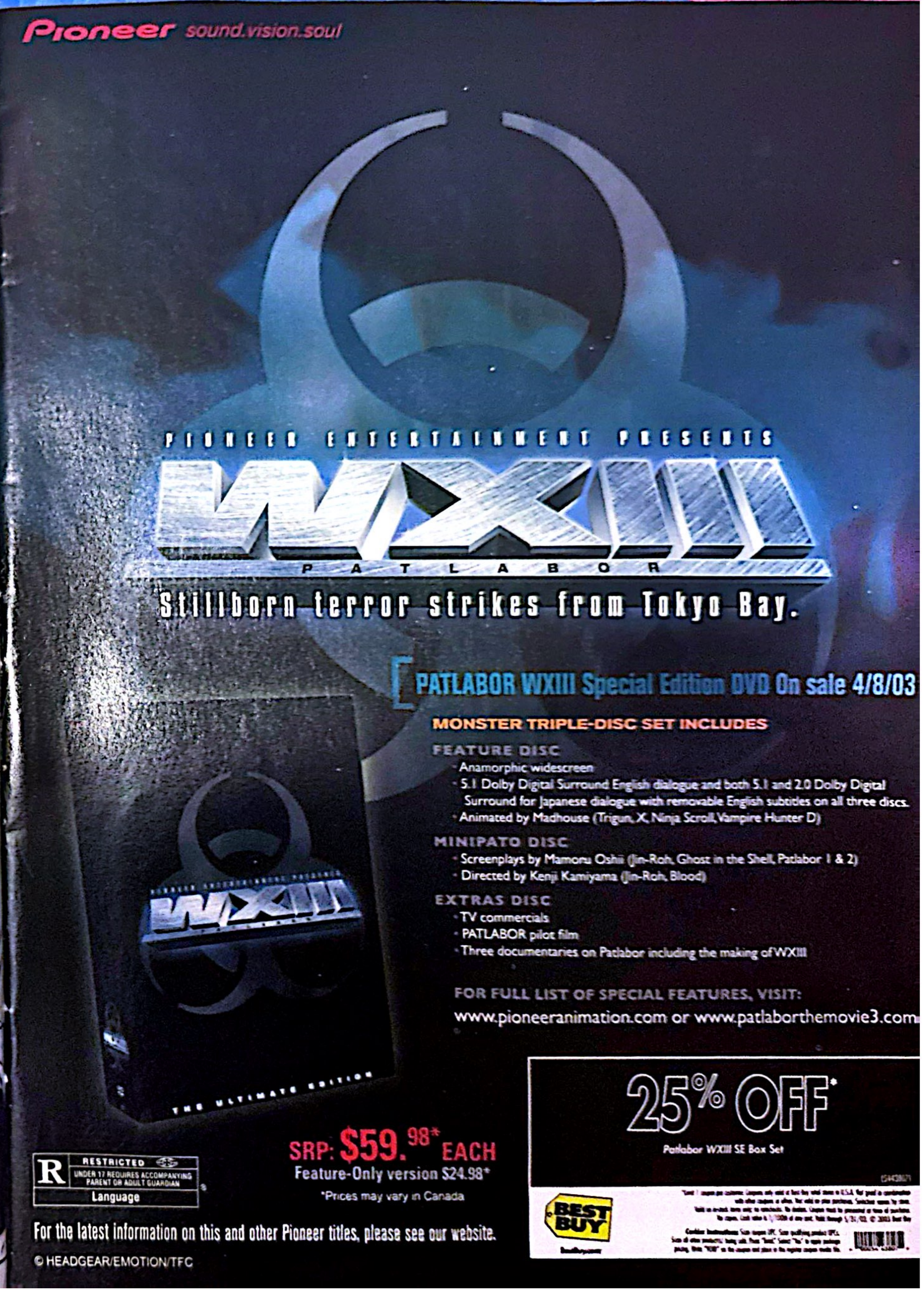
4,000 Raditz wasn't kidding! Even though Piccolo, Gohan and the rest of the Z Warriors have been training for a year, the Saiyan **Nappa** kills Tien, Yamcha and Piccolo, and trounces the rest. Nappa can even level a city with a gesture! [S]

8,000 Dead men don't tell tales, but they do kick butt! While **Goku** was dead, he ventured to see the legendary King Kai, the catfish-faced Lord of Worlds. He teaches not only the powerful Spirit Bomb Attack, but the Kaio-Ken, which lets Goku double his power level, but could burn him up with the energy! When Goku fights the last Saiyan, Vegeta, he has to take it to a x3 Kaio-Ken just to hurt Vegeta! [S]

18,000 With the Earth at stake, Goku fights the far superior **Vegeta**! Goku manages to hurt him with the Kaio-Ken technique, but it uses most of his power, while Vegeta is hurt but not finished. Only because Goku, Gohan and Krillin fight him together is Vegeta defeated and the Earth is saved. [S]



24,000 After being beaten by Goku, **Vegeta** flees to be healed by the fellow minions of Frieza. After he's rejuvenated, he discovers that after fighting to the near-death, he has become much stronger—a genetic trick of the Saiyan race. That's how Goku, Vegeta and the crew's power level raise so quickly in *DBZ*. [N]



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POWER LEVELS 100,000-15,000,000

THE APPEARANCE OF THE SUPER SAIYAN

120,000

Captain Ginyu cuts like a knife. Vegeta, Gohan and Krillin head to the alien planet Namek to look for a new set of Dragon Balls to wish back their friends. Frieza's minions await them, including the powerful Captain Ginyu, leader of the Ginyu force. (N)

180,000

Send in the big guns! After healing from his fight with Vegeta, **Goku** hops a spaceship to Namek—one outfitted with a special high-gravity chamber to train in. After Goku masters fighting in 100 times Earth's gravity, he steps off the ship to hand Ginyu his ass, although he is severely beaten through Ginyu's tricks. (N)

300,000

The wounded **Goku** is taken to a rejuvenation chamber, and that means more power. But he has to hurry because the evil Frieza, self-proclaimed "owner of the Universe," has found Gohan, Vegeta and the rest! (N)

530,000

Evil things come in tiny packages...at first. In his tiniest form, **Frieza** has killed countless enemies and destroyed entire races—including the Namekians as he searched for the Dragon Balls. (N)

3,000,000

Think Goku's a goner against Frieza? **Goku** manages to master the **Kaio-Ken x10**, which takes his base power and multiplies it to this staggering number. It's enough to make Frieza have to get serious. (N)

4,000,000

When **Frieza** transforms into his **final form**—which is small, compact and imminently deadly—he kills Vegeta with a single shot to the heart, and then makes Goku's friend, Krillin, explode with a simple finger twitch! He lets Goku get a few shots in—and then reveals the terrifying truth that he's not even at full power. (N)

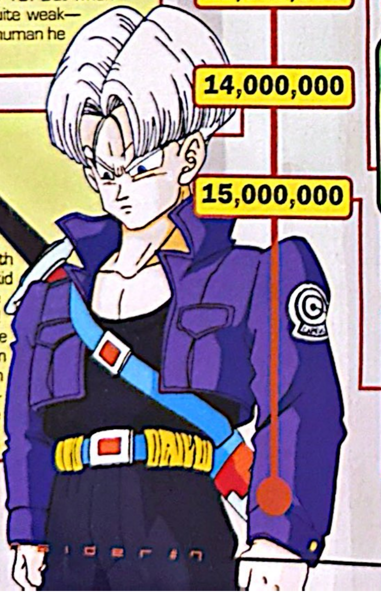
10,000,000

Back from the future! **Cell** is an android from an alternate future, who has come back in time to achieve his perfect state. To do that, he has to eat his fellow androids 17 and 18. But when he first arrives, he's quite weak—and so he absorbs any human he can find. (C)

12,000,000

Goku will not die! Raising himself to his full **100% power**, **Frieza** has another plan: with a mighty blast directed at Namek, Frieza starts a chain reaction that blows up the entire planet! (N)

14,000,000



Back from the future II! When an improved Cyber-Frieza arrives on Earth while Goku is gone, the Z Warriors think the Earth is doomed—until this kid shows up out of nowhere and turns **Super Saiyan**! He reveals himself to be **Trunks**, Vegeta's kid from the future, here to warn Goku about the upcoming onslaught of the Androids! (A)

15,000,000

The heir's apparent: When **Goku** watches Frieza mercilessly kill his best friend, Krillin, he's suddenly had enough. All the rage from the pain Frieza has caused courses through, and he becomes the legendary **Super Saiyan**! No force in the universe could save Frieza now! (N)

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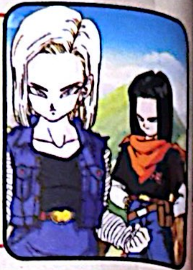
POWER LEVELS 15,000,000-35,000,000
OF ANDROIDS AND ASSIMILATION

16,000,000

Nothing infuriates **Vegeta**, prince of the Saiyans, more than knowing Goku has surpassed him. So in the years after Frieza's destruction, he trains relentlessly—in a specially designed 300x gravity chamber! He brutally forces himself to become the next **Super Saiyan**. (A)



18,000,000

Androids 17 & 18 have awoken! While Goku is deathly ill, the two androids—male 17 and female 18—obliterate city after city, taking whatever they please, and diabolically killing for fun. (A)

20,000,000

This gives the sneaky **Cell** enough time to sneak up on Android 17 and devour him. When Cell digests, he mutates into a brand-new **Imperfect form**! (C)

21,500,000

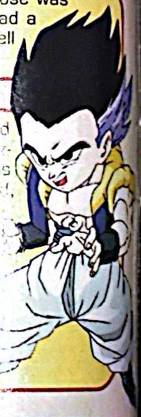
Of course, **Goku** was ready to take the Androids on—but then he was struck with a fatal heart disease. Luckily, Future Trunks brought him medicine from the future—but Goku still remained unconscious for days. (A)

22,000,000

Android 16's only purpose was to fight Goku, but he had a gentle disposition—so Cell killed him. (A)

25,000,000

The ruler of the universe, the **Supreme Kai**, is also one of the most powerful beings in it. But he can't keep his jaw from hitting the floor when he realizes how powerful all the Saiyans are! (B)

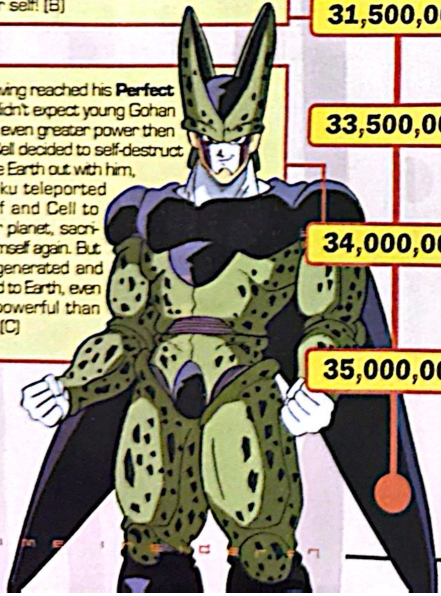


28,000,000

When Majin Buu was [illegible] on the Earth by the evil wizard Babidi, the only hope was two little boys—Goku's son, Goten, and Vegeta's son, Trunks (not the future one). Already Super Saiyans at 7 and 8 years old respectively, they learned the amazing Fusion technique—where they merged into **Gotenks**! (B)

31,500,000

Despite having beat Cell, the years of peace after it took its toll on **Gohan**—as did his mom, Chichi, who forced Gohan to stop training and start studying! Although Gohan got into a good high school, he was actually weaker than his younger self! (B)



33,500,000

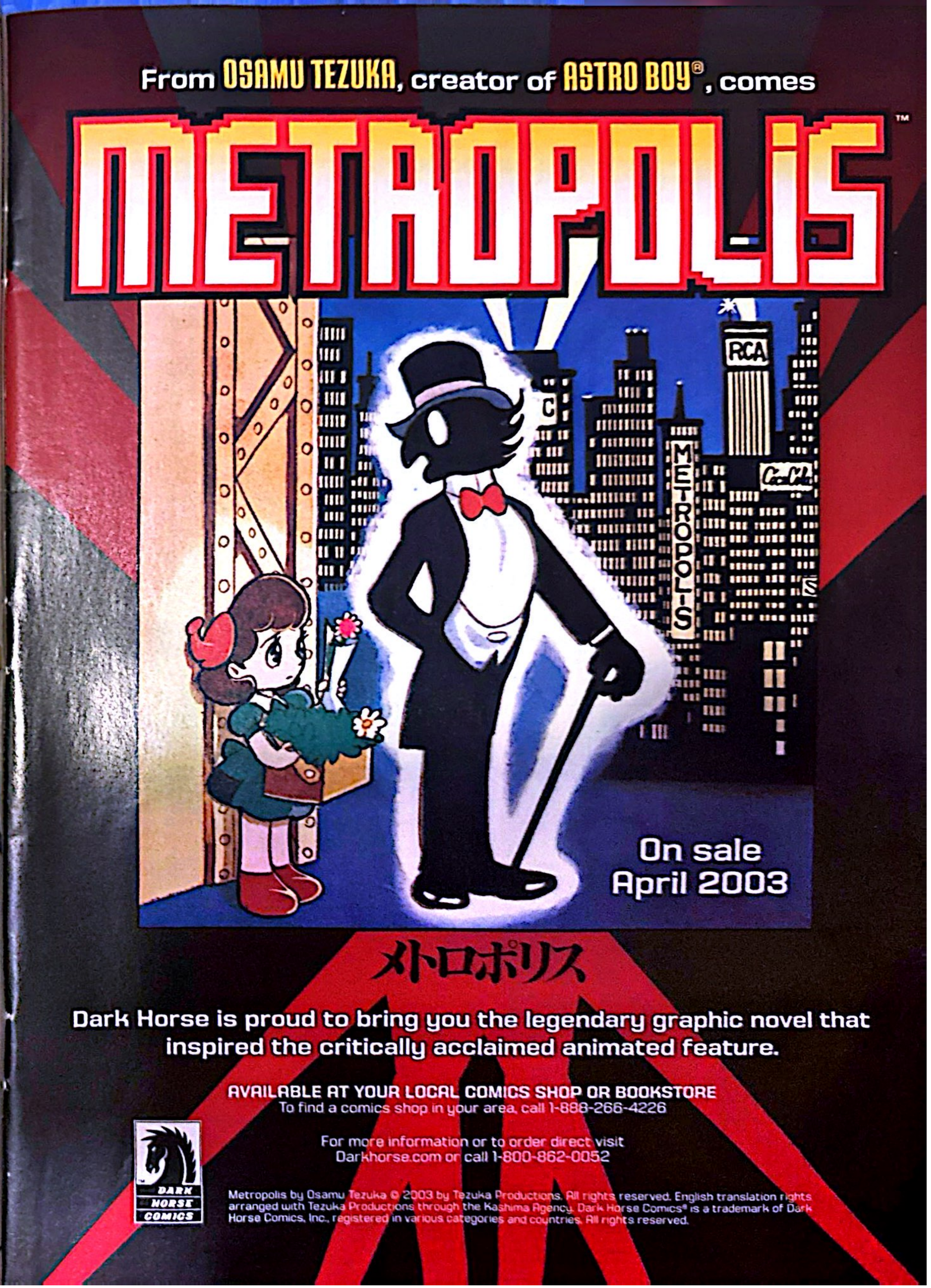
Cell, having reached his **Perfect form**, didn't expect young Gohan to have even greater power than Goku. Cell decided to self-destruct and take Earth out with him, but Goku teleported himself and Cell to another planet, sacrificing himself again. But Cell regenerated and returned to Earth, even more powerful than before! (C)

34,000,000

Cell, believing himself invincible, decided to hold the seven-day Cell Games to give himself a chance to kill all of the Earth fighters one-on-one. **Goku** and Gohan trained in the Hyperbolic Time Chamber, and achieved **Super Saiyan 2**—spikier hair, and less waste of power. (C)

35,000,000

Super Saiyan 2 Gohan, weakened by his lengthy fight with Cell, nearly gave up when Cell returned. But Goku called out to him, reminding him of all the pain and death Cell had caused and would cause, and Gohan found the power to obliterate Cell forever. (C)



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POWER LEVELS 35,000,000-125,000,000

THE END OF EARTH

42,000,000

42,500,000

60,000,000

62,500,000

75,000,000

80,000,000

90,000,000

93,000,000

100,000,000

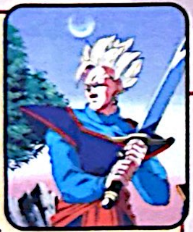
106,000,000

125,000,000

The evil wizard Babidi takes over Vegeta's mind, turning him into the heartless, powered-up **Majin Vegeta**! But when Buu finally awakes, even the possessed Vegeta realizes what must be done. Determined to finally be the hero, he fights Buu on his own. When Vegeta realizes Buu is too powerful, he gives up his life in a kamikaze attack—but alas, to no effect. (B)

Even though **Super Saiyan Gotenks** manages to wallop Buu for awhile, the problem with the Fusion technique is that it only lasts for 30 minutes! When their time's up, the boys have to run! (B)

The kids are all right! With a few hours in the Hyperbolic Time Chamber to train, Goten and Trunks get the Fusion technique down pat—and manage to turn into **Super Saiyan 3 Gotenks**! Even Super Buu is no match for him, but he is devious enough to trap SS3 Gotenks and absorb him! (B)



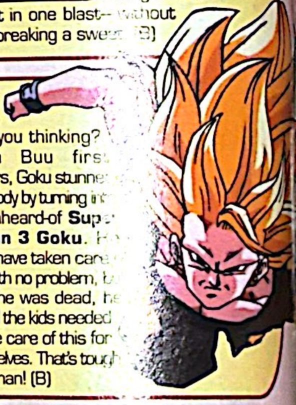
After Buu nearly kills Gohan, the Supreme Kai whisked him away to the planet Kai to train in secret. An Elder Kai releases all of Gohan's latent power and returns him to Earth. Without ever turning Super Saiyan, **Mystic Gohan** crushes Super Buu—until Buu finds a way to eat him, too. (B)

With Super Buu raging around Earth and all the other Z Warriors eaten, reluctant allies Goku and Vegeta have to make the ultimate sacrifice and fuse. Together, they become **Vegito**, the most powerful creature in the universe. He tosses Buu around like a rag doll. (B)

Sure **Super Saiyan Goku** is dead, but he's been training in the afterlife! (B)

He looks like a big, fat blob of chewing gum—but he'll destroy your town as well as your teeth. **Majin Buu** is an ancient evil entity released by the wizard Babidi. No matter how much damage he's dealt—even if he's ripped to pieces—he always comes back together, good as new! (B)

It's a nervous breakdown! Buu freaks out and splits into good and evil selves. The evil Buu devours the good one and turns into **Super Buu**! This Buu performs the Human Extinction Attack—killing every human being on the planet in one blast—without ever breaking a sweat! (B)



Goku, what were you thinking? When Buu first appears, Goku stunned everybody by turning into the unheard-of **Super Saiyan 3 Goku**. He could have taken care of Buu with no problem, but since he was dead, he figured the kids needed to take care of this for themselves. That's tough love, man! (B)

This kid isn't all right. After being beaten, Super Buu freaks out and transforms into his more powerful original state! Without batting an eye, **Kid Buu** jumps into the air and destroys Earth with a finger! (B)

And **Vegito** can go **Super Saiyan**, too! He's so powerful that when Buu turns him into candy, Vegito still kicks Buu's butt! (B)

Managing Editor Robert Bricken has a regular power level of 3, but when fused with Asahi Super Dry beer, he can max out to 4 1/2.

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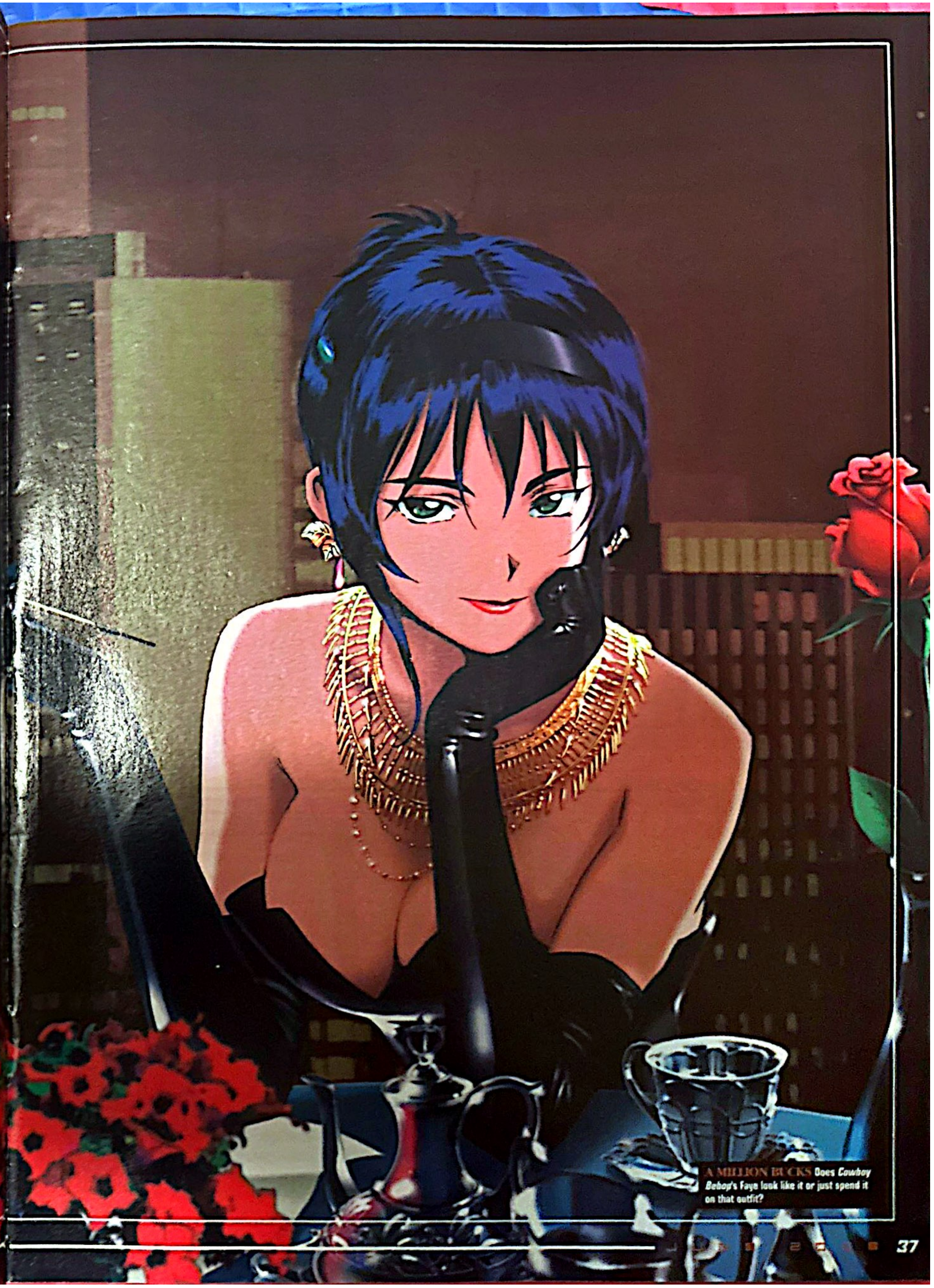
COUTURE SHOCKS

Spring Fashion Has Arrived! Our Panel of Experts Declare Who's *Hot* and Who's *Not.*

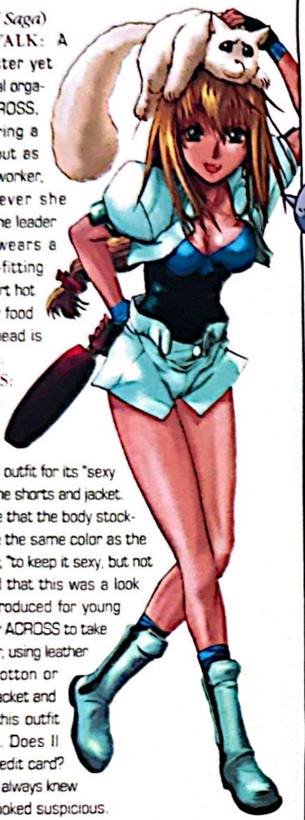
By Trisha L. Sebastian

Ah, Spring—when young men and women's thoughts turn to *lookin' fine.* ♦ 'Tis the season when the fashion designers trot out their newest outfits to wow the public, and the world of anime is no exception. From the trend-conscious ladies of *Love Hina* to the eternally orange-suited Goku, you're likely to see stunning new fashions in anime as on the catwalks of Paris. The only difference is that anime isn't bound by all that stingy reality (although Parisian fashion shows don't seem too constrained either). ♦ *Anime Insider* had to find out exactly how our anime favorites stacked up against the real world, fashion-wise. Polling four experts—Parisian-taught San Francisco couture designer Cynthia Ewers, international fashion critic Steve Gold, and assistant professor at the Fashion School at Kent State University Catherine Leslie, Ph.D. and her top student/hardcore anime fan Alyssa Morawski—we found out exactly which anime characters have fashion sense and which ones have no sense at all. Who's hot? Who's not? And for goodness sakes, *why?!* ♦ We'll tell you, if you read on. Grab your Prada handbag *and* your giant robot as we take a look under the anime catwalk!



A MILLION BUCKS Does *Cowboy Bebop*'s Faye look like it or just spend it on that outfit?

EXCEL *(Excel Saga)*

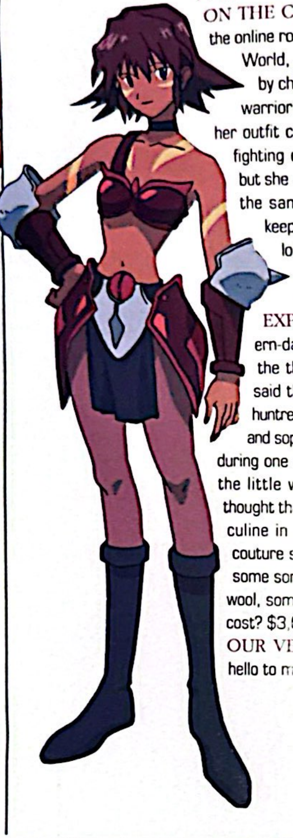


ON THE CATWALK: A minion for the sinister yet incompetent ideological organization known as ACROSS. Excel *might* be wearing a standard uniform—but as she only has one co-worker, who knows? Whenever she reports to Il Palazzo, the leader of ACROSS, Excel wears a bolero top and form-fitting bodice, tucked into short hot pants. The emergency food ration sitting on her head is an optional accessory.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: Look out Britney Spears, a new sex symbol is on the way. Steve Gold praised this outfit for its "sexy 'Heidi' look," especially the shorts and jacket. One thing Gold did note that the body stocking-like bodice could be the same color as the shorts or a lighter color, "to keep it sexy, but not so trashy." Ewers said that this was a look that could be mass-produced for young teens—another way for ACROSS to take over the world. However, using leather for the bodice and cotton or duchess satin for the jacket and shorts, the price for this outfit would start at $500. Does Il Palazzo even have a credit card?

OUR VERDICT: We always knew those teeny-boppers looked suspicious.

MIMURU *(.back//SIGN)*

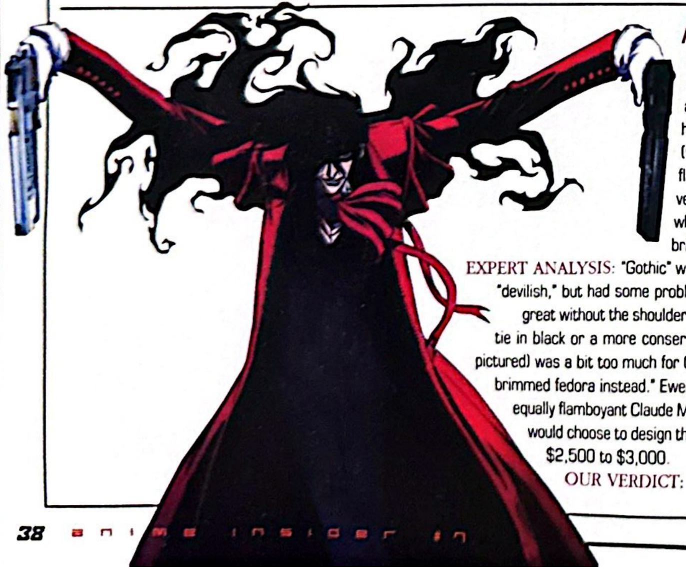


ON THE CATWALK: As a player in the online role-playing game called The World, fashion is dictated mostly by character class. Mimiru is a warrior called a Heavy Blade, so her outfit can't be constricting when fighting off hordes of monsters—but she doesn't mind looking hot at the same time. She chooses to keep order in a brief bodice and loincloth, with decorative face and body paint to complete the effect.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: "Modern-day superhero" seems to be the theme of her outfit. Ewers said that this reminded her of a huntress outfit that broadway star and soprano Sarah Brightman wore during one of her concerts. She loved the little wings on the bodice, but thought that the outfit was a bit masculine in design. If recreated in a couture style, Ewers said she'd use some sort of stretchy material over wool, something hard and crisp. Her cost? $3,000 to $4,000.

OUR VERDICT: It's time to say hello to more bodices!

ARUCARD *(Hellsing)*



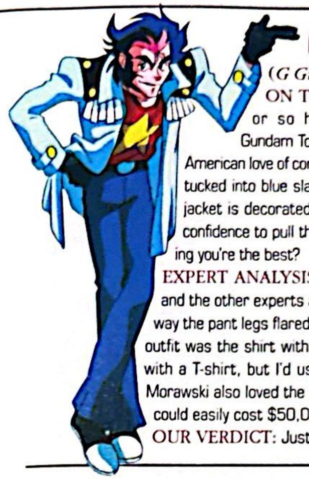
ON THE CATWALK: Vampires are usually known for their distinct fashion sense, and Arucard is no different. As a vampire hunter for the British Hellsing Organization (who fights rogue/evil vamps), Arucard is flamboyant in a red flowing jacket over a black vest and tailored shirt. Black pants and boots, white cuffed gloves, a red bow tie and wide-brimmed hat complete the look.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: "Gothic" was the word of the day. Gold called this look "devilish," but had some problems with the whole ensemble. "It would be great without the shoulder embellishment, and the tie could be a string tie in black or a more conservative 4-in-one," he critiqued. The hat (not pictured) was a bit too much for Gold, who advised Arucard to "go for a wide brimmed fedora instead." Ewers said that it was similar to the designs of equally flamboyant Claude Montana or Tokyo native Yohji Yamamoto. She would choose to design the coat in velvet and wool, for a cost of about $2,500 to $3,000.

OUR VERDICT: Red *does* hide the bloodstains better.

CHIBODEE CROCKETT

(G Gundam)



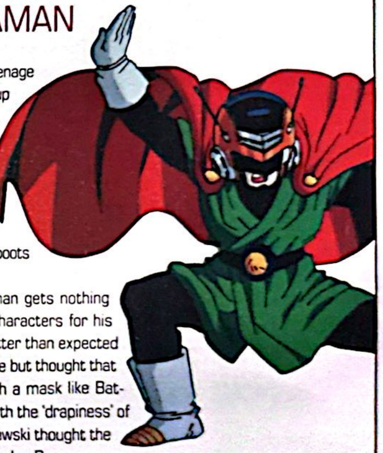
ON THE CATWALK: Chibodee is the American ideal—or so he thinks. Fighting for Neo-America in the Gundam Tournament with his Gundam Maxter, Chibodee shows American love of comfort and casual style, strutting his stuff in a red shirt tucked into blue slacks. The shoes appear to be saddle-shoes, and his jacket is decorated with fringe and large brass buttons. It takes real confidence to pull this outfit off—but what is more American than knowing you're the best?

EXPERT ANALYSIS: "This is funky, fun and wearable," Gold declared, and the other experts agreed. Ewers liked the fringe on the jacket and the way the pant legs flared out over his feet. For her, the worst element of the outfit was the shirt with its bright yellow star. "You could wear this jacket with a T-shirt, but I'd use a cooler graphic design," she said. Leslie and Morawski also loved the jacket, saying that if it were made out of leather, it could easily cost $50,000.

OUR VERDICT: Just a bit too Elton John for us, as is Chibodee's name.

THE GREAT SAIYAMAN

(Dragon Ball Z)

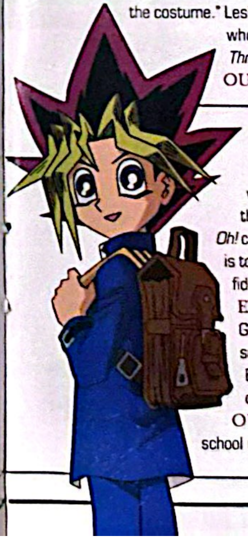


ON THE CATWALK: When the teenage Gohan—son of Goku—needs to beat up baddies without revealing his powers to his high school classmates, a superhero outfit is the only way to go. Designed by Bulma, the Great Saiyaman saves the day in a green wraparound tunic over a black bodysuit. A red cape, anchored by gold buttons, a pair of loose-fit white boots and a helmet complete the ensemble.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: Although Gohan gets nothing but grief from all the *Dragon Ball Z* characters for his duds, the Great Saiyaman came off better than expected with our panel. Ewers loved the costume but thought that the helmet had to go. "I would go with a mask like Batman's because the helmet contrasts with the 'drapiness' of the costume." Leslie and Morawski thought the whole outfit had a Baroque or *Three Musketeers* look to it, saying it was "pretty good over all."

OUR VERDICT: Adam Ant wants his cape back.

YUGI MUTOH *(Yu-Gi-Oh!)*



ON THE CATWALK: Yugi's school uniform shows a sense of style with a pair of deep blue slacks and jacket with brass buttons down the front. The inside is lined with pockets to hold the jillions of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* cards Yugi needs on a daily basis. In his regular Yugi mode, the outfit is too large and wrinkled, but when he transforms to the competent, confident Yami Yugi, the outfit really comes together.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: For a little kid, Yugi's look came highly regarded. Gold called Yugi's outfit "smart, contemporary and unique." Morawski said this outfit would look great for the guys in 'N Sync or the Backstreet Boys, complimenting its military look. Leslie added that it was reminiscent of Napoleonic coats, or even perhaps the mod style of the Beatles.

OUR VERDICT: The world could use more boyband members in school uniforms.

LOOKIN' GOOD

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HARUKO KARUHARA WIG

Let's face it—no matter how cool cosplaying is, you really have to wonder whether you'd go so far as dyeing it. *FLCL*'s Haruko Haruhara's got awesome pink hair, and in anime, the hair makes the character!

http://www.funshop.com/keloswig.html

SHINAI BAMBOO KENDO SWORD

Tons of anime characters use swords, but they're a little too scary for us. But *Rurouni Kenshin*'s Yahiko has the perfect sword for us, on account of being, well, wooden and blunt. At least we can run in the halls with this one.

http://www.bytheblade.net/practice.shtml

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Admit it: as soon as you saw them in *Serial Experiment Lain*, you had to have Lain's ultra-cute bear pajamas. Kawaii and yet functional, no one can resist hugging morose little cyber-geniuses, especially when they've got these jammie-jams on!

http://shop.elfeater.com/

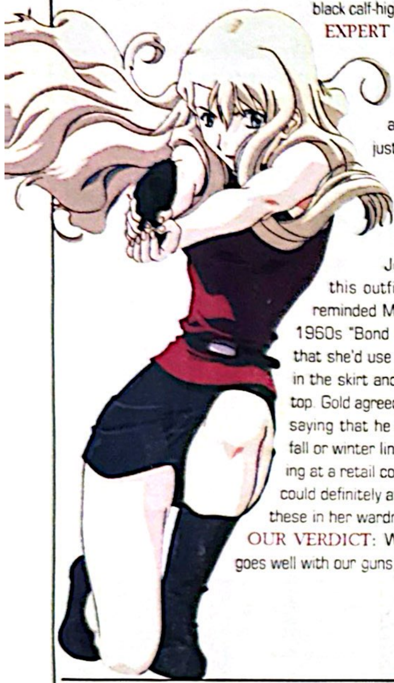
MALE JAPANESE SCHOOL UNIFORMS

For the most part, women dominate the scene—but why should we let them have all the fun? For a simple look, why not this gakuran, a standard boys' school uniform, seen all over various anime titles? From there, the possibilities are endless.

http://www.limebarb.com/store/uniforms.html

■ **MIGUEL A.E. BETITA**

MIREILLE BOUQUET *(Noir)*



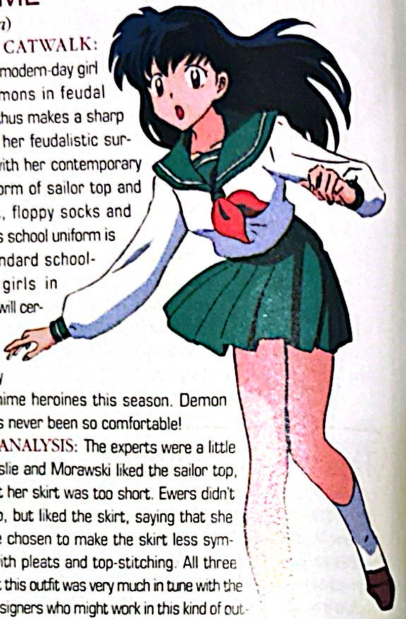
ON THE CATWALK: Cool customer Mireille is always ready for a gunfight in her sleeveless turtleneck top and black skirt—which is good, because she's an assassin, so it sort of comes with the work. Slit up one side for movement, the outfit is topped off with a small handbag and black calf-high low-heeled boots.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: This was one of the few outfits that all of the experts agreed on. "This is just a cool outfit, very cool," enthused Ewers, adding that she could see *Alias* star Jennifer Garner in this outfit. The entire look reminded Morawski of the late 1960s "Bond girl," and she said that she'd use pleather or leather in the skirt and polyester for the top. Gold agreed that this was sexy, saying that he could see it in the fall or winter lines for 2003. Starting at a retail cost of $100, Mireille could definitely afford to put more of these in her wardrobe.

OUR VERDICT: We want that top! It goes well with our guns, too.

KAGOME

(Inu-Yasha)

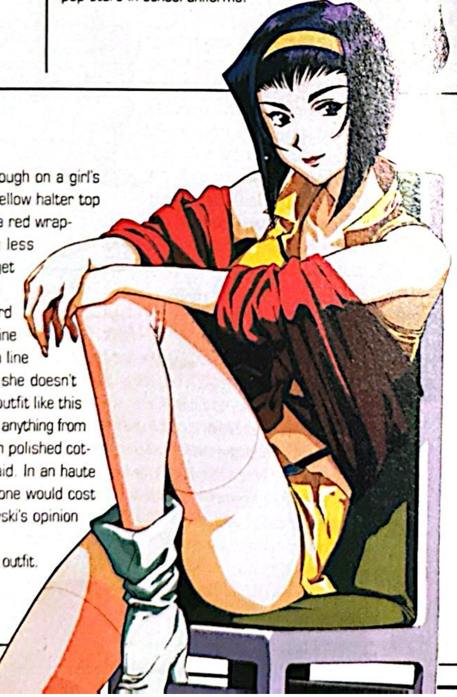


ON THE CATWALK: Kagome is a modern-day girl fighting demons in feudal Japan, and thus makes a sharp contrast to her feudalistic surroundings with her contemporary school uniform of sailor top and short skirt, floppy socks and loafers. This school uniform is pretty standard schoolwear for girls in Japan, and will certainly be worn by a great many teenage anime heroines this season. Demon hunting has never been so comfortable!

EXPERT ANALYSIS: The experts were a little divided. Leslie and Morawski liked the sailor top, but thought her skirt was too short. Ewers didn't like the top, but liked the skirt, saying that she would have chosen to make the skirt less symmetrical with pleats and top-stitching. All three agreed that this outfit was very much in tune with the 1960s. Designers who might work in this kind of outfit were American designer Tommy Hilfiger and multip honors-winning French designer Sonia Rykiel.

OUR VERDICT: The world could use more fem pop stars in school uniforms.

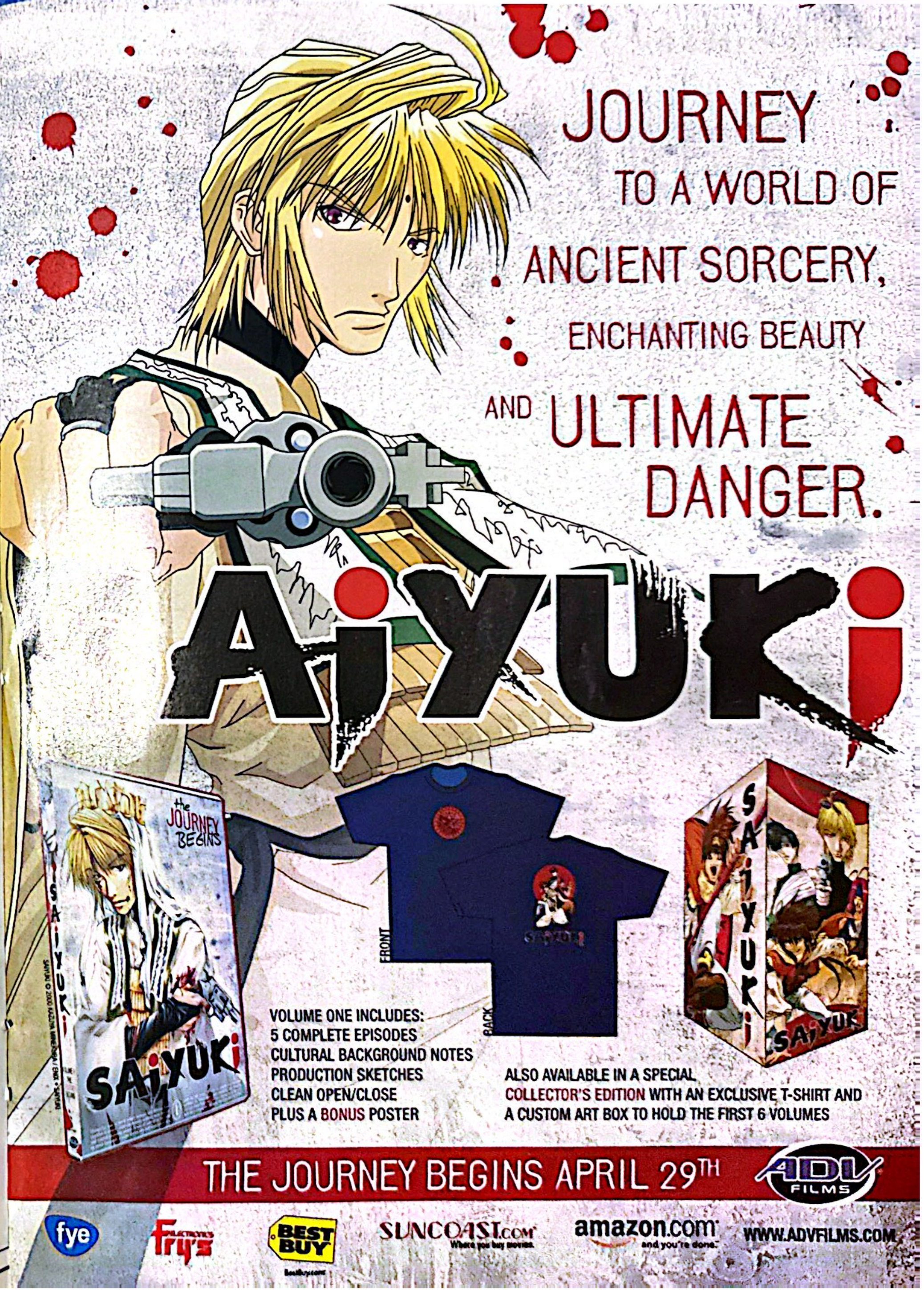
FAYE VALENTINE *(Cowboy Bebop)*



ON THE CATWALK: Hunting bounties through space is tough on a girl's clothes. That's why Faye usually sticks to her outfit of bright yellow halter top with matching hotpants, held up by suspenders, coupled with a red wrap-style jacket. Of course, she could probably wear something less revealing—but she tends to both distract the criminals and get her way with this red-hot ensemble.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: Sexy, sexy, and more sexy was the word from our experts. Gold said, "The best aspect is that it's right in line with the new sexy looks for 2003 a la 'Puffy' Combs' Sean Jean line and New York designer Michael Kors." He also said that while she doesn't usually go this route, he could see Courtney Cox Arquette in an outfit like this (and Spike reminded him of David Schwimmer!). The cost would be anything from $50 to $500, he said, depending on what fabric was used, from polished cotton to rubber. "This could be streetwear or daywear," Ewers said. In an haute couture style, she'd choose cashmere for Faye's wrap and it alone would cost $700 to $1,200. One drawback, however, in Leslie and Morawski's opinion is that it's not very protective or durable for bounty hunting.

OUR VERDICT: We're getting a wedgie just thinking about this outfit.



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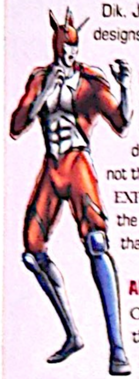
THE WORST DRESSED LIST

FIVE DESIGNS THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE MARK

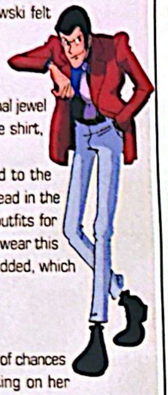
For every sharp-dressed man like Vash, there's a silly-dressed man like Dik Dik Van Dik. Just to prove that you can't win them all, here are the five least-liked designs from our panel of experts.



DIK DIK VAN DIK (*Ultimate Muscle*)

ON THE CATWALK: Once you know that the this professional wrestler's name is the Japanese release is "Gazelleman," the reason behind the design of his fuchsia, blue and white wrestler's outfit becomes clear. But not the name change. Never the name change.

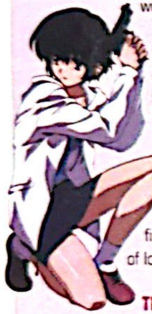
EXPERT ANALYSIS: "The blue lines remind me of veins," Ewers said, when the character was explained to her. Leslie and Morawski felt that the horns were a definite fashion "don't."



ARSENE LUPIN III (*Lupin the 3rd*)

ON THE CATWALK: Dashing and daring, international jewel thief and ladies' man Lupin sports a red blazer, blue shirt, pink tie and white pants.

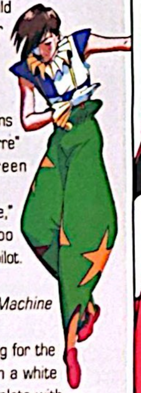
EXPERT ANALYSIS: Lupin's crimes even extend to the world of fashion, according to our experts. "They remind me of Jughead in the Archie comics," Gold said. This was the least favorite of the men's outfits for Ewers. "This is too ordinary for a dashing guy," she said. "You couldn't wear this to a formal function because the pants are too much like jeans," she added, which were way too high in her opinion.



KIRIKA YUMURA (*Noir*)

ON THE CATWALK: At 14, Kirika hasn't had a lot of chances to develop a fashion sense-instead concentrating on her chosen profession of assassin with Mireille Bouquet. That's probably why she's dressed in a simple black skirt and blue top, with hooded sweatshirt.

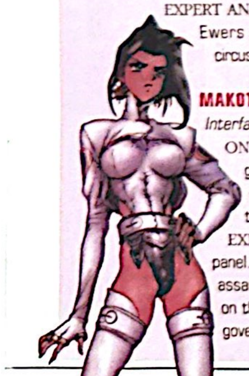
EXPERT ANALYSIS: Ewers hated the outfit calling it "too ordinary and sloppy." It reminded her of something one would find at the GAP. Leslie and Morawski were highly in favor of losing the bobby socks.



TROWA BARTON (*Gundam Wing*)

ON THE CATWALK: When he's not crushing his enemies with his Heavyarms Gundam, the moody, quiet Trowa travels as the circus clown Pierre. "Pierre" wears a blue and white shirt tucked into oversized green balloon-like pants with a starry print.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: "Jean Paul Gauthier did pants like these," Ewers said, adding that the outfit was a little too circusy to be taken seriously, especially for a Gundam pilot.



MAKOTO ARAMAKI (*Ghost in the Shell 2: Man Machine Interface*)

ON THE CATWALK: The beautiful cyborg working for the government Makoto is ready for more action in a white skintight French-cut bodysuit and jacket, complete with thigh-high boots.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: This outfit was not a hit with the women on our panel. Ewers said that the way the bikini was cut was an "invitation to assault." Leslie and Morawski said they disliked the "scar-like seams on the bodice," adding that it seems "a little too dominatrix-like for government work." ■ TS

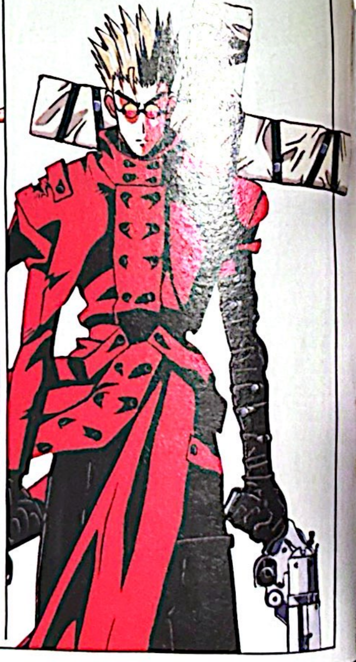
VASH THE STAMPEDE (*Trigun*)

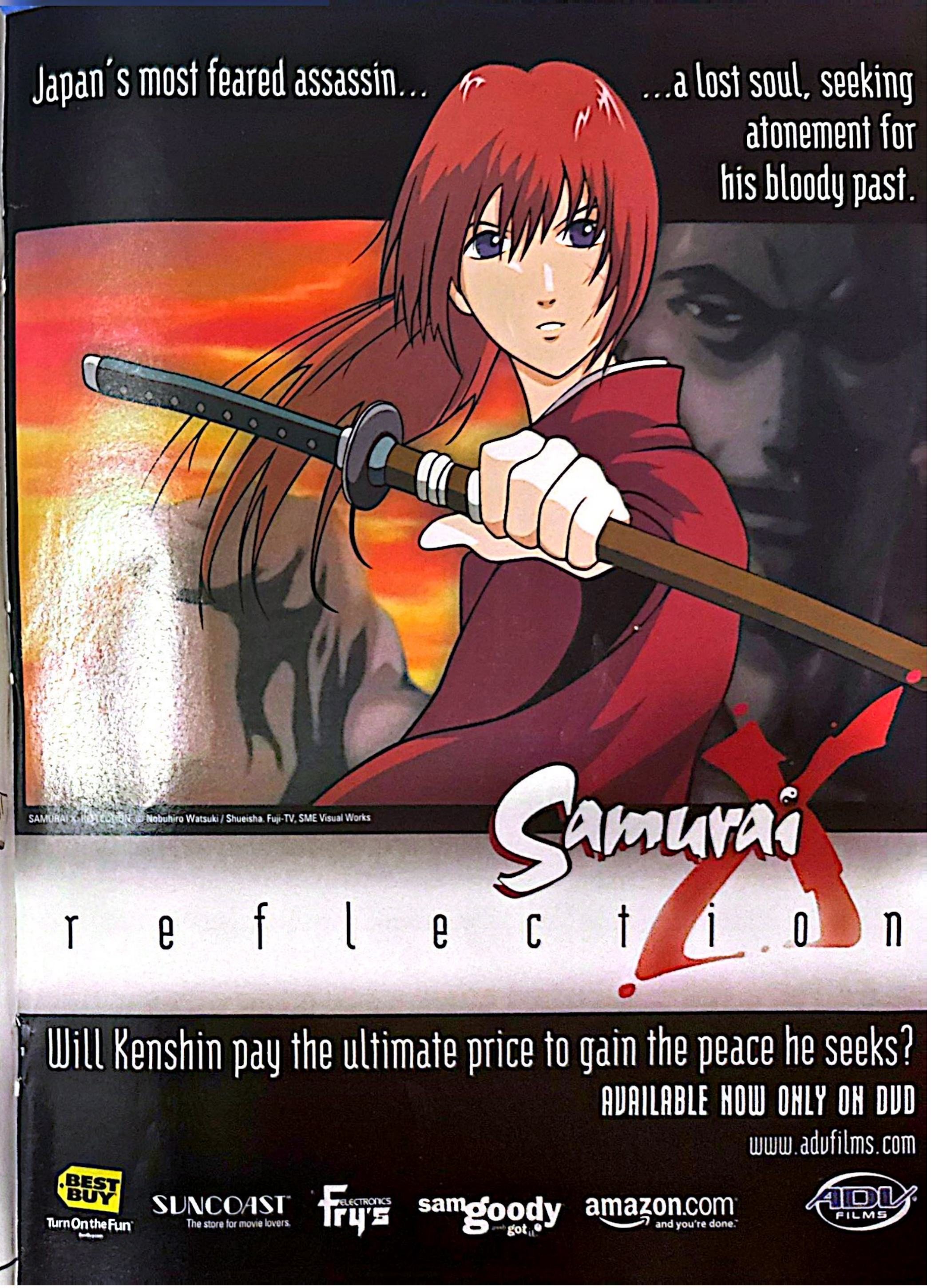
ON THE CATWALK: Vash the Stampede is a man of contradictions—he's feared although the sci-fi, western planet Gunsmoke, but he acts like an idiot; he's a superb shot, yet he's obsessed with love and peace; and somehow, the heat of the desert planet almost never gets to him, even though he wears an ankle-length red coat over black slacks tucked into boots—somehow. His left arm is wrapped in a gauntlet, and his heavy boots are topped with metallic kneepads.

EXPERT ANALYSIS: Ewers had nothing but praise for Vash's outfit. "Japanese designers are great with coats," she said. "I'm hoping this style will come back." She said that if she were to use plush wool or something with a nap, she could design this coat for $2,500, mainly because it's so tailored and fits so snugly. Ewers said this outfit has to be worn to an event—she could see someone even wearing this coat to the opera!

OUR VERDICT: We're burning up just thinking about that much wool and that much heat.

Paris be darned—Associate Editor Trisha Sebastian has been wearing a penguin costume for nearly thirteen years, and she's not going to change now.





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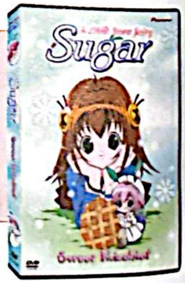

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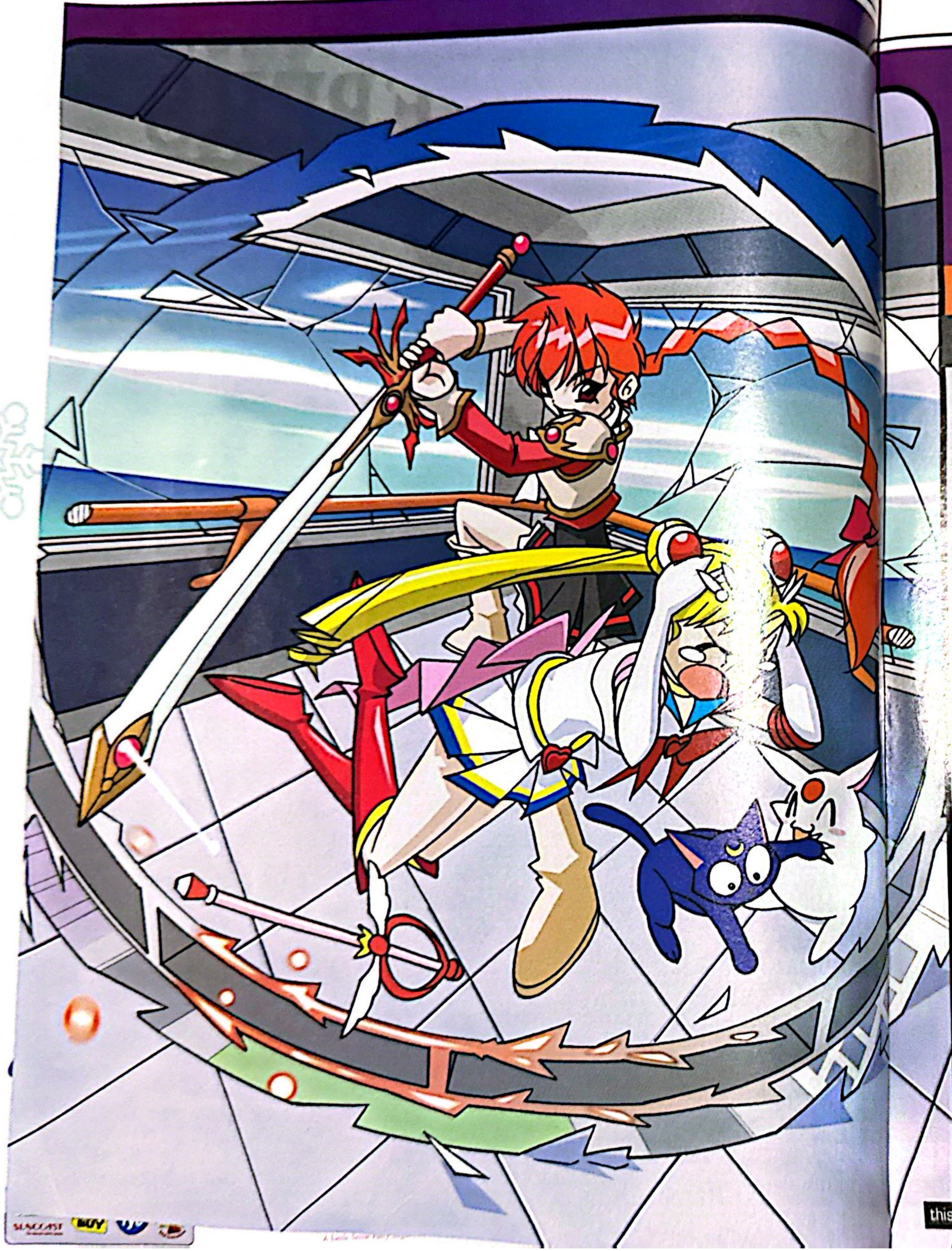


this month's battle drawn by ROBERT DEJESUS

BY MIGUEL A. S. ESTITA

LAST MAN STANDING

A BATTLE YOU THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER SEE

SAILOR MOON VS. HIKARU SHIDOU

SAILOR MOON

HIKARU SHIDOU

SAILOR MOON		HIKARU SHIDOU
Moon Kaleidoscope	WEAPON	Eskudo Long Sword
Pink	FAVORITE COLOR	Red
15	AGE	14
Her cat Luna	CUTE COMPANION	Her blob Mokona
Crybaby	TEMPERAMENT	Happy and hot-headed

MOON BIO: Serena was a klutz, until she learned s actually the princess of the Moon. Now she's a th super powers! As the heroic Sailor Moon, she ts the Earth, with her talking cat-mentor Luna and her Sailor Scouts.

SHIDOU BIO: Star of *Magic Knight Rayearth*, e student Hikaru and her two friends Umi and ere teleported across dimensions to be champions town Cephiro. Now trained in fire magic and armed with a sword, Hikaru fights for right as a Magic Knight!

THE BATTLE BEGINS

After Luna tells Serena that there's weird energy coming from the top of Tokyo Tower, she transforms into Sailor Moon to check it out. When she arrives, she sees the Tower glowing eerily, and makes her way to the top.

No sooner does she arrive when a young, red-haired girl suddenly appears out of nowhere, massive sword in hand!

"Huh?!" asks a confused Hikaru. "Umi? Fuu? What happened to Cephiro? Why am I back?"

She looks just like one of evil Queen Nepherenia's agents, thinks Sailor Moon. "What is your business here?" she shouts.

Whirling around, sword raised in an instant, Hikaru sees a girl in a red, white, and blue sailor outfit striking a ridiculous pose by the railing.

"You're an agent from Cephiro, aren't you?!" she shouts, swinging her sword in a vicious arc that Sailor Moon barely avoids.

"Hey! That could have *hurt*!" Sailor Moon yells. She launches herself from the ground with a flurry of kicks, defending herself from Hikaru's sword with her Moon Kaleidoscope, eventually knocking her into a wall.

This one's kinda easy, Serena thinks, as Hikaru slowly stands back up. "In the name of the moon, I will—"

"*RED LIGHTNING!!!*" screams a furious Hikaru, leveling her sword at Sailor Moon Crimson electricity fills the deck as it shoots towards Serena.

"Aaiiee!" screams Sailor Moon, who throws herself out of the way. With another flip and roll, she lands on her feet. "Moon Gorgeous Meditation!" she cries, thrusting out her Moon Kaleidoscope. Sailor Moon twists in a rainbow of colors and lights, which appear to solidify and shatter with explosive force!

The sonic boom that follows is staggering, shaking Tokyo Tower to its foundation. Across the city, power flickers and blacks out. Even in the darkness, though, Sailor Moon's crescent wand glows brilliantly in rainbow pinpoints of light as she finishes in another pose she just thought of the other day.

THE WINNAH:

As glass crunches underneath her boots, Sailor Moon surveys the devastated room, content. Hikaru is unconscious on the floor.

"Never, ever, ever interrupt my speech," she says. "And just in case, stay away from my boyfriend too!"

Are there any colossal anime match-ups you'd like to see on these pages? Let us know at AnimeInsider@aol.com now!

REANIMETED

CLASSIC ANIME FROM DAYS OF YORE:

SPEED RACER

SPEED RACER

Women love him and men want to be him. He has the ultimate job driving the ultimate car. If that isn't enough, this wholesome 18-year-old kid is a martial-arts expert with a beautiful girlfriend to boot. Here he comes, here comes Speed Racer—the original fast and furious demon on wheels.

Debuting in the late '60s on American TV, *Speed Racer* addicted us with easily- animated car races (speed lines make stationary cars look fast), blindingly fast dialogue and campy crime capers that often involved the attempted theft of Speed's gadget-filled, super souped-up racecar, the Mach 5.

Before we even knew what anime really was, *Speed Racer* became an American favorite. Or maybe we were just fans of the car.

THE FAST TRACK

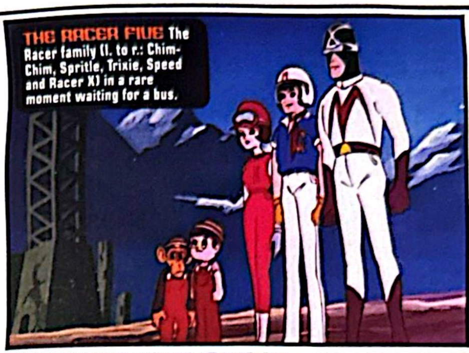
Years before Speed's debut on television screens across the United States, he was named Go Mifune (go also meaning "five" in Japanese) and starred in the manga series *Mach Go Go Go* conceived by creator Tatsuo Yoshida. *Mach Go Go Go*, along with *Kyojin no Hoshi* (*Star of the Giants*), a series about the Japanese Giants baseball team and *Ashita no Joe* (*Tomorrow's Joe*), a story about a young boxer, would become the cornerstone of Japan's popular sports manga genre.

In 1962, Yoshida and his two brothers founded the animation studio Tatsunoko Production, and in 1967 they debuted the animated version of *Mach Go Go Go*. During this time, Translux, an American company which specialized in one-hour theatrical newsreels, decided to bring over the racing title to U.S. television.

In the process of Americanizing the series, the Mifune family's name was changed to Racer and Go's name was changed to Speed. *Mach Go Go Go* became *Speed Racer*. Although extremely popular in U.S. syndication, the series ended in Japan after 52 episodes, thus putting an end to its stateside run as well.

It wasn't until the Children's Safety Network spearheaded their promotional campaign in the late '90s around the series that the show returned to the limelight. Using Speed as their spokesperson, the CSN even commissioned a real-life, working Mach 5 to be auctioned off.

Following their campaign, a U.S.-remake of the series was aired on MTV, dubbed *The New Adventures of Speed Racer*, even as *Speed Racer: The Movie* (which was really a compilation of three *Speed Racer* episodes) was making its tour in film festivals and art house theatres. Speed Racer soon appeared in Volkswagen commercials, and NASCAR racers began talking about the difficulty of taking on Speed in ESPN commercials.



THE RACER FIVE The Racer family (l. to r.: Chim-Chim, Spritle, Trixie, Speed and Racer X) in a rare moment waiting for a bus.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Spanning the globe for races to win, Speed's Go Team consisted of girlfriend Trixie, his father Pops, best friend Sparky and candy-obsessed, comic relief team of little brother Spritle and mischievous chimp Chim-Chim. In almost every episode, Speed and the Go Team would face challenges from racing car masters hoping to win different tournaments, and Spridle and Chim-Chim would stowaway in the Mach 5's trunk.

But just as often, the gold-hearted Speed would end up over his head against spies and criminal masterminds that were somehow involved with the racing circuit. In fact, many times throughout the series, Speed would learn the hard way that not all the fighting abilities and racing skills in the world can get you out of a bind—which is where Racer X would come in.

The mysteriously masked Racer X was the undefeated champion of the racing circuit (until he started letting Speed win, that is). He was also a super-spy...and Speed's older brother, Rex Racer.

[illegible]ed this stoic relationship—as much as they loved [illegible] sweet, sweet ride—the Mach 5. With its stilts, cut[illegible] bulletproof cockpit, robot scouts, and underwater capabilities, the Mach 5 would leave James Bond's own Aston Martin in the dust.

ACCELERATING NICELY

Firmly entrenched in the U.S. and Japan's pop culture, there doesn't seem to be an end to the *Speed* phenomenon. Nickelodeon is currently bringing the original series to a new generation with episodes available on video and *Speed Racer: The Movie* available on DVD. Those wanting to know all there is to know about Speed Racer might want to check out Elizabeth Moran's book *Speed Racer: The Official 30th Anniversary Guide.*

Japan has already released their own 2001 remake of *Speed Racer* although there currently have been no plans to import it stateside. Family Home Entertainment just released the first 11 dubbed TV episodes as the *Speed Racer Limited Edition Vol. 1* DVD on April 22, but Warner Brothers has had the rights to do a live-action *Speed Racer* film for years. You may be seeing Speed drive into a theater near you. ●

Jersey City-based freelance writer Kane Tung's racing experience is limited to the New Jersey Turnpike. But he has a monkey in his trunk too.

RACING CIRCUIT

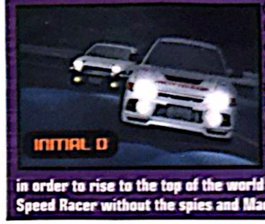
FEEL THE NEED FOR SPEED? WE'RE READY TO SATISFY

CHO-SUPER CAR GATTIGER *(unlicensed)* Mix Battle of the Planets with Speed Racer and you have this late '70s series where five young heroes drive racing cars which can merge into one super racing car.

EX-DRIVER *(Media Blasters)* Set in the future, intelligent cars-gone-rogue are reined in by the eX-Driver team—high-school girls whose job is to race against and capture them.

FUTURE GPX: CYBER FORMULA *(unlicensed)* Another future tale where an artificially intelligent top-of-the line racing car acknowledges an inexperienced 14-year-old as its sole driver.

INITIAL D *(TokyoPop)* As close to actual street-racing you can get. The story follows young Fujiwara as he races his souped-up car against other gangs. With three seasons and several OVAs and movies, the Initial D phenomenon is just beginning in America.



INITIAL D

SUPER GRAND PRIX *(Liberty National)* Young Sean Corrigan struggles through various setbacks in order to rise to the top of the world of Grand Prix racing. It's Speed Racer without the spies and Mach 5. ■ KT

THE REAL DEAL

WANNA DRIVE THE MACH 5? CHIM CHIM NOT INCLUDED!

"The Mach 5 is the most complex and ingenious car ever built—a tribute to my father's imagination, genius and technical skills!"
—*Speed Racer*

THE MACH 5

It was built by California-based Focus on Cars and it could be yours. Used to promote a national safety tour by the Children's Safety Network, several different version of the Mach 5 were built and sold.

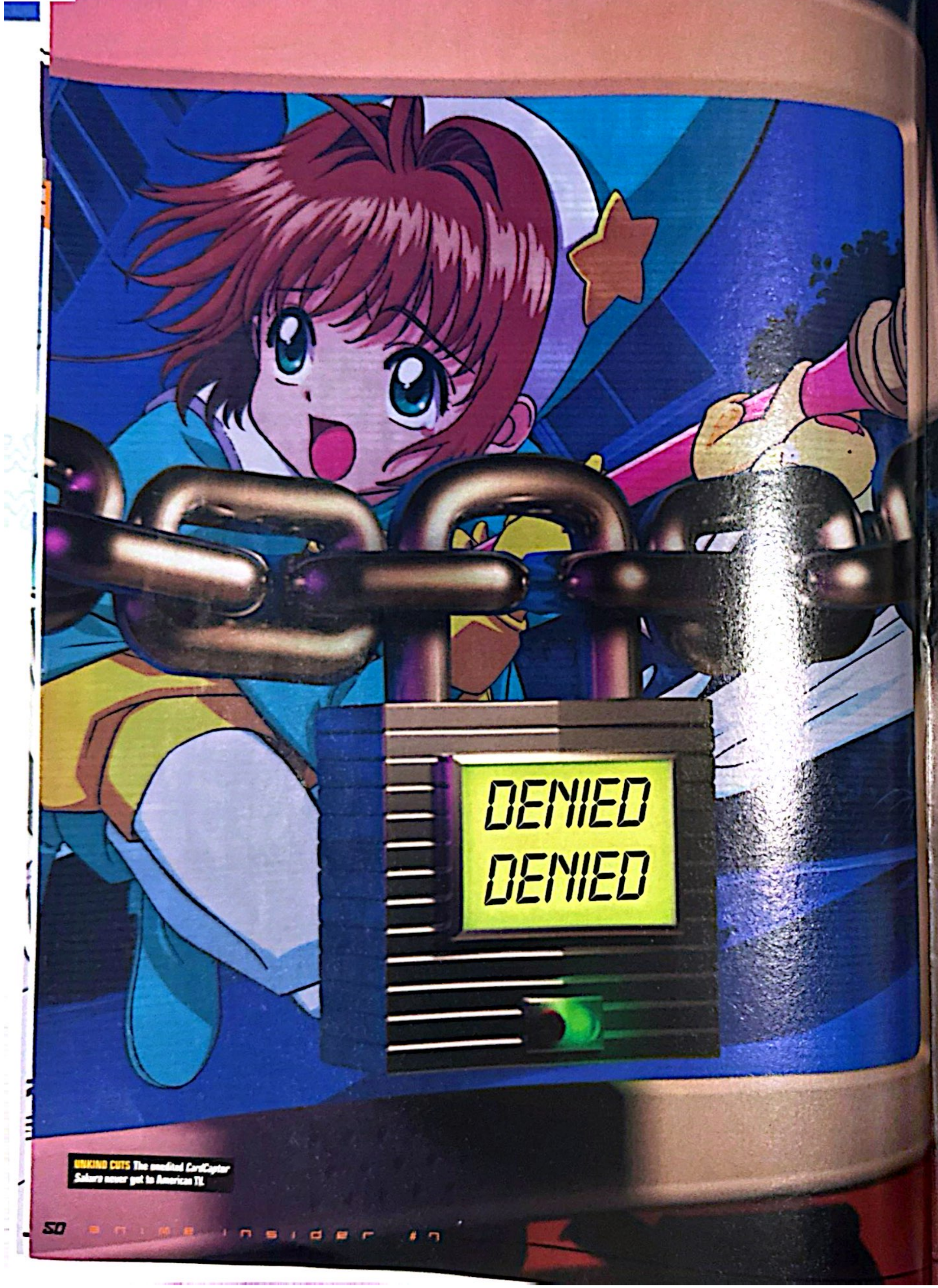
Able to reach speeds of185mph, it doesn't have the 50,000 horsepower that its animated counterpart is supposed to have. But what it *does* share with the animated Mach 5 would make even the most casual *Speed Racer* fan itching to pull out the plastic:

CUTTING SAWS—That darn forest in your way again? Press the "C" button on the steering wheel to extend your rotary cutting blades and drive away laughing as Greenpeace patriots shake their fists vainly.

STILTS/JACKS—Need to work under the car? Press the "A" button to extend the stilts underneath. Unfortunately, due to the laws of gravity, the real Mach 5 can't jump like its animated version.

HOMING ROBOT—A van blocking your view? Press the "G" button to call out your flying homing robot to scout ahead to see what lies ahead.

The Mach 5s were sold from $58,000 and up. Unfortunately, the street-legal models don't carry the above features. ■ KT



UNKIND CUTS The unedited *CardCaptor Sakura* never got to American TV.

Opening photo: Getty Images

DAYS OF CHAINS

HAS CENSORSHIP RUINED OUR FAVORITE ANIME, OR FREED IT TO CONQUER AMERICA?

BY ZAC BERTSCHY AND KANE TUNG

Anime fans smiled the smile of the content when CLAMP's popular series *Card Captor Sakura* was announced for American TV in 2000. They eagerly woke up one Saturday morning to watch the romantic adventures of Sakura—and they found *Cardcaptors*, a heavily-edited action-filled boys' series. Smiles turned to outrage.

[illegible]ately, this kind of reediting and censorship—as [illegible] denounced it—is nothing new. Not only will the [illegible]ce and nudity that often appear in Japan never [illegible] American airwaves, but entire shows can be remade to [illegible] demographic. The process infuriates fans, but we owe anime's popularity today to that editing knife.

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Even before the average cartoon-watching kid became savvy enough to know where their shows came from, adapting Japanese cartoons for American audiences was a relatively inexpensive way for studios come up with a new show. In the 1960s, *Gigantor*, *Speed Racer* and *Astro Boy* were redubbed in English and in the 1970s, Sandy Frank Entertainment changed *Gatchaman* by adding new kid-friendly scenes and sweeping a villain's transsexuality under the rug using careful plot changes (see sidebar).

The editing process was taken to the extreme in early October 1985 when producer Carl Macek was hired by Harmony Gold to make them a hit using the rights to a few anime series they'd picked up—*Macross*, *Southern Cross* and *Genesis Climber Mospeada*.

According to Macek, now executive of new business development of ADV Films, the success of Mattel's *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* set the standard of a series having at least 65 episodes. While Harmony Gold had the rights to *Macross'* 36 episodes, Macek had to combine it with the other two shows to get it on the air. *Southern Cross* and *Mospeada* filled the run, but radical measures were taken to unite them into the American amalgam known as *Robotech*.

With substantial dialogue changes and clever use of footage as flashbacks, the three shows became three seperate eras. For instance, in the final episode of *Macross*, the heroine Misa is convinced that humanity will be destroyed by the impending threat of the Zentraedi and leaves for space to pass on the human culture. In *Robotech*, the same character—now named Lisa—says she's in space to search for the technology that could give humanity the edge in the war. The two stories diverged wildly, and while both were very popular, anime lovers felt a line had been crossed.

"I was the subject of intense fan backlash—death

FIRST IN FLIGHT Early anime like *Gigantor* only needed to be dubbed into English.

threats and all sorts of stuff," admitted Macek. "People would humiliate me in public, they would insult me in front of my friends and family. It was—and I'm serious—it was grotesque."

Even with this backlash, *Robotech* is hailed as hooking an entire generation of Americans onto anime. "Thanks to Carl Macek, millions of kids were introduced to something so complex that even 18 years after it first aired on TV they still have fond memories watching it," explains George Phillips, editor-in-chief of AnimeNewsNetwork.com.

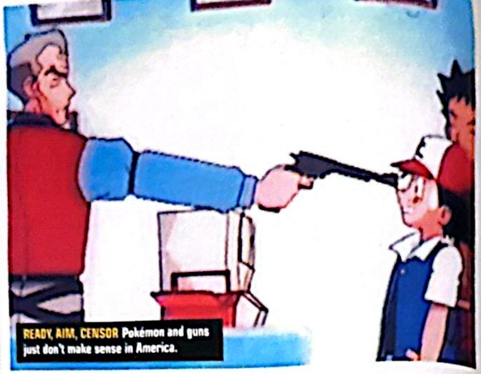
That's the exact claim Macek makes when confronted about his editing work. "What's the first thing a television series should do?" Macek asks pointedly. "It should *get on TV*. By demanding shows air unedited, fans are making it *not* go on TV. By doing that they're doing a disservice to the product, because the product never gets a chance to get a foothold in pop culture."

PRACTICING THE STANDARDS

It would be a long time before another *Robotech*-esque editing job would raise fans' ire. In the meantime, companies through the 1990s dealt with a more traditional form of censorship.

Networks are well aware that Japanese animation is more mature than home-grown cartoons, and place content restrictions on what they'll agree to air. When it comes to anime on broadcast television, licensors such as FUNimation (*Dragon Ball Z*) and Nelvana (*Cardcaptors*, *Beyblade*, *Medabots*) will edit out anything broadcasters such as Fox and Cartoon Network will not air which is decided upon by each network's "Standards and Practices" department, or "S&P". They're the ones to declare no nudity, no realistic gunplay, no bloody violence, and so forth—all to protect their company's ability to do business.

As Nelvana vice-president of production Jocelyn Hamilton explains, "When you have public airwaves and the government licenses you with certain rules and regulations to be able to broadcast your specific programming." That's why you never saw the episode of *Pokémon* where Ash was threatened by a gun, or you'll never know that a certain green blobby Digimon was actually a brown pile of poop. Those shows were censored in America, and, as Macek would agree, they flourished.



READY, AIM, CENSOR Pokémon and guns just don't make sense in America.

ABRIDGED TOO FAR?

Nelvana's chance to have its own anime hit was a show called *Cardcaptors*, a heavily edited version of *Card Captor Sakura* that aired on Kids' WB! in 2000. *Pokémon* was still going strong at the time, so the show's focus on collecting cards seemed a natural follow-up.

Unfortunately, Nelvana's executives felt a complete shift of the show's demographic was in order. Originally, *Card Captor Sakura* featured nearly 80 episodes of stories clearly meant for girls. The focus was entirely on Sakura as a heroine and her romantic relationships. Only about a third of each episode showcased Sakura fighting the Clow Cards.

The re-edited *Cardcaptors* shifted the focus to the action-oriented male character Shaoran Li, transforming it into boys' action show. Scenes that focused on Sakura were heavily cut; in fact, the first seven episodes of the original series were dropped or postponed to begin with episode eight which was Li's first appearance. The romantic subplot between Sakura and Li was also taken out. The new show dropped many of the elements that some fans say attracted them to the show in the first place.

"The hate mail is more than I can bear," says Hamilton, who worked on the re-editing of *Cardcaptors*. "There have been some anime fans who have been positive, but mostly negative. I can understand that it's hard for them to understand."

Cardcaptors was cancelled midway through the series, and Pioneer's unedited *Card Captor Sakura* DVDs would go on to outsell the televised *Cardcaptors* versions.

While Nelvana would eventually try again, something was changing in the way anime appeared on television which may have rendered censorship unnecessary forever.

> "By demanding shows air unedited, fans are making it *not* go on TV. They're doing a disservice to the product"
> —*Robotech* producer Carl Macek

MOVING TO TOON TOWN

The Cartoon Network launched in October 1992 with Looney Tunes episodes and other shows provided by parent Warner Brothers. In 1995, it first got into anime with *G-Force* (another edit of *Battle of the Planets*), and offered looser standards and more airings per day than broadcast TV could. *Dragon Ball Z* was its first anime hit. Originally on broadcast TV, endless cuts had been required of the show—no blood could be shown, no killing (which meant the frequently dying characters were said to "travel to another dimension"), and the fights had to be trimmed in length and action. "Broadcast networks would say, 'No hitting to the head at all,'" remembers FUNimation president Gen Fukunaga.

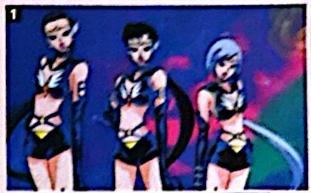
That is, until Cartoon Network offered it a second home. On the cable channel, characters can bleed all they want (as long as the blood doesn't "spurt"), limbs can be ripped off (as long as it's not too graphic), and people can actually die. "Cartoon Network would say, 'You *can* do hitting…but not 50 hits to the head,'" says Fukunaga.

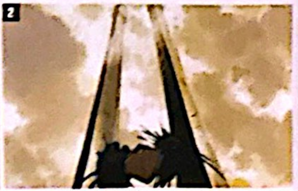
Fans accepted the Network as a home for unedited—or less edited—anime on TV. Recognizing the hungry fan base, Cartoon Network created the late night Adult Swim block in 2001 where shows were edited even less. Now the heavily disclaimed Adult Swim lineup includes the smash hit series *Cowboy Bebop* and *Trigun*, two action shows that feature heavy gunplay, light swearing and provocative costumes. Meanwhile, Toonami, the kid-friendly afternoon block—shows fight-intensive *Dragon Ball Z* and sword-duel heavy *Rurouni Kenshin*.

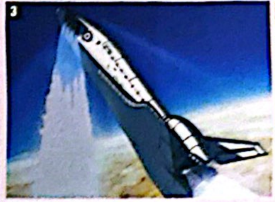
While proud of their programming, Cartoon Network vice-president of programming Terry Kalagian reminds us that mature shows can't be the bread and butter of her network. "We love the fan base, but we're there for a broad audience, not for the niche audience," says Kalagian. "We can't pick titles that just go for the otaku, because they won't get ratings."

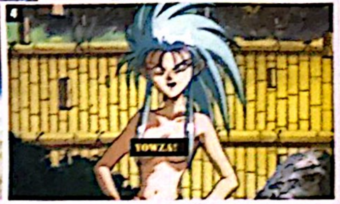
AS NOT SEEN ON TV

Anime's Most Memorable Cuts, Bumps and Outright Bans









SAILORS AWAY! Many shows have found their controvercial sexual situations removed. Scenes from *Sailor Moon S* and *Sailor Moon Stars* featured sexual themes that couldn't cross the American border, such as the male Starlights' ability to turn into women **(1)** and the lesbian romance between Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune, not to mention how the final episodes of *Sailor Moon* featured our heroine baring more skin than found on a *Playboy* playmate.

LOSING THE GENDER BATTLE Sometimes, dialogue tweaks can declaw elements unsuitable for kids. In the original unedited *Gatchaman*, the villain Zoltar was a transsexual who changed his/her sex periodically, but in the American *Battle of the Planets* he was two people—a brother and sister team—thanks to careful edits and new voices.

BEBOPPED OUT Current events can impact what shows you get to see. Cartoon Network had started airing the stylish action show *Cowboy Bebop* around the time of the events of 9/11, and subsequently chose not to air episode 22, where a terrorist blows up a twin-towered building **(2)**. The theatrical release of *Metropolis*, featuring collapsing skyscrapers, would be similarly delayed. Later, *Bebop*'s episode 19 was pulled from the schedule after the Columbia disaster because of an appearance by the Space Shuttle in the show **(3)**.

BY ANY OTHER NAME While Japan is pretty cool about religion or the lack-thereof, some Americans can be more sensitive. Thus in *G Gundam*, Domon Kasshu's God Gundam and the evil Devil Gundam were renamed to the safer Burning Gundam and Dark Gundam, respectively.

SUIT UP There may be no need for Tenchi, but when one episode of *Tenchi Muyo!* took place in a bathhouse and Ryoko and the girls ran around naked **(4)**, there was a big need for the Cartoon Network to add in some digital swimsuits. The covering of nudity is a common edit.

LUPIN GOES FASCIST Apparently the Cartoon Network doesn't believe Nazi imagery belongs in a cartoon. Go figure. Cartoon Network nixed the episode of *Lupin III* featuring the master thief posing as Hitler in order to revive a senile man's memory. ■ **KT and ZB**

THE FINAL (UNEDITED) WORD

Of course, all the shows on Cartoon Network are edited to some degree, thanks to the "S&P." But now instead of major story cuts, anime editing can actually be benign, updating shows for a modern audience.

Dragon Ball Z has been known for a number of dialogue updates, including use of slang words such as "dude" or funny accents for villains. In Pioneer's *Lupin the 3rd*, created in 1972, modern American references abound including references to basketball star Shaquille O'Neal and pop star Britney Spears. Both FUNimation and Pioneer—and all companies who rewrite their anime—hope to make the shows accessible and enjoyable to the widest possible audience.

Truly, editing is anime's necessary evil. But fans need not be denied their pure Japanese experience—all these shows are available uncensored in their original format on DVD.

And there's nothing evil about that at all. ●

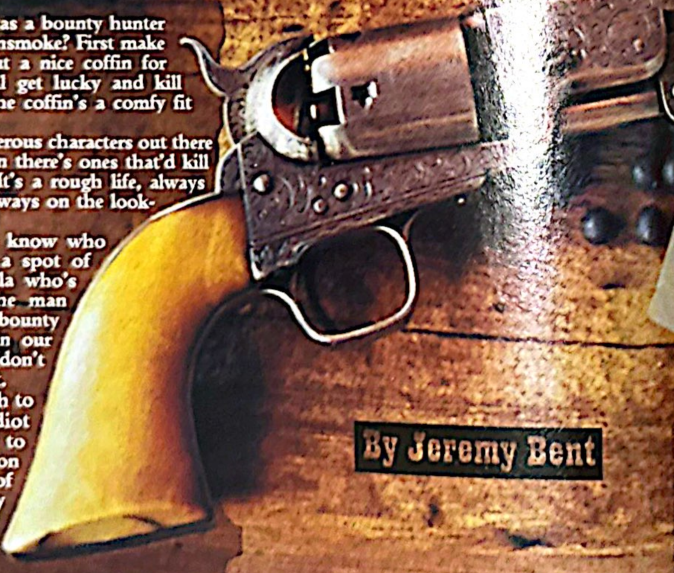
Ironically, Bertschy's and Tung's article was heavily edited.

Scanned with CamScanner

WARNING SIGNS

GET RICH OR GET KILLED HUNTING DOWN THE MOST DANGEROUS VARMINTS IN 'TRIGUN'

By Jeremy Bent



Think you can make it as a bounty hunter here on the planet Gunsmoke? First make sure you've picked out a nice coffin for yourself. Maybe you'll get lucky and kill your quarry, but make sure the coffin's a comfy fit for you too.

Ya see, there's a lot of dangerous characters out there in the desert, and here in town there's ones that'd kill you as soon as look at you. It's a rough life, always having to watch your back, always on the lookout for Vash the Stampede.

What? You say you don't know who Vash is? Son, you're in for a spot of trouble if you run into a fella who's destroyed countless cities, the man with the $$60,000,000,000 bounty on his head–that's counted in our local double dollars–and you don't even know who he is! Shee-oot.

Well, if you're crazy enough to go out there with your idiot brain and all, you'd do well to read up on the law-breakers on these posters here first. Most of 'em will fetch you a pretty penny, but myself? I'd steer clear if I planned on having another birthday.

WANTED
$$60,000,000,000
for the capture of
VASH THE STAMPEDE

For the crimes of mass murder, grand scale demolition, assault with a deadly weapon, assault with a non-deadly weapon, and the destruction of July City.

…CRIPTION: MALE. WITH SPIKED BLOND HAIR. GREEN EYES. MOLE ON LEFT CHEEK. DRESSES IN RED. USES A SILVER .45 LONG COLT REVOLVER. USUALLY WEARS A PAIR OF YELLOW SUNGLASSES WITH ZIGZAG ARMS.

Be warned – this wanted criminal is one of the most destructive forces known to mankind, and is currently classified as the first living Act of God–having single-handedly caused the destructions of several towns across Gunsmoke. The recommended course of action upon encountering him is to reverse direction as fast as possible, as Vash is the one responsible for the destruction of July City and the massive explosion that left it in ruins. Vash is considered to be armed and extremely dangerous by law enforcement officials. His accuracy with a gun is near flawless–he is even able to shoot bullets out of the air! He is also known for his ability to spastically dodge any fire that comes his way. Trying to track Vash can prove difficult–a definite drifter, he can be expected to turn up anywhere and destruction will follow!

WANTED

THE NEBRASKA FAMILY

For the crimes of jailbreak, assault, and tampering in God's domain through science

Father-son criminal team. Father—balding, with white hair, few teeth, and a manic disposition. Son—Gofsef, thirty foot-tall mechanically enhanced monstrosity. Admittedly hard to miss. Although the leader of the Nebraska clan is relatively weak, son Gofsef makes up for it in spades with his devastating pneumatic fist. The Nebraska Family has recently broken free from prison and is rumored to be headed for Inepril City.

$$700,000

WANTED

BRILLIANT DYNAMITES NEON

For the crimes of murder, armed robbery, grand theft locomotive, and unlicensed use of noble gasses

A tall man, roughly 8', with dark skin. W[illegible] outfit with large cylindrical shoulder mounted d[illegible] powers his outfit's neon lights. Expect to find B[illegible]amites Neon to be accompanied by a large squa[illegible]ilarly-dressed Bad Lad Gang, his partner[illegible]

$$500,[illegible]0

WANTED

DESCARTES

For the crimes of murder and extortion

Fat, ugly, with a tall green Mohawk and long pierced earlobes. Extremely tall, with a large cybernetic arm. Arm is mainly used for throwing a giant metal boomerang. Although he masquerades as a bounty hunter, Descartes is actually just a ruthless killer whose victims are occasionally criminals. His last known whereabouts were somewhere outside Felnarl Town, as he searches for Vash the Stampede—and his bounty.

$$200,000

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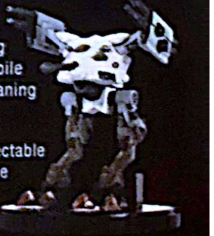

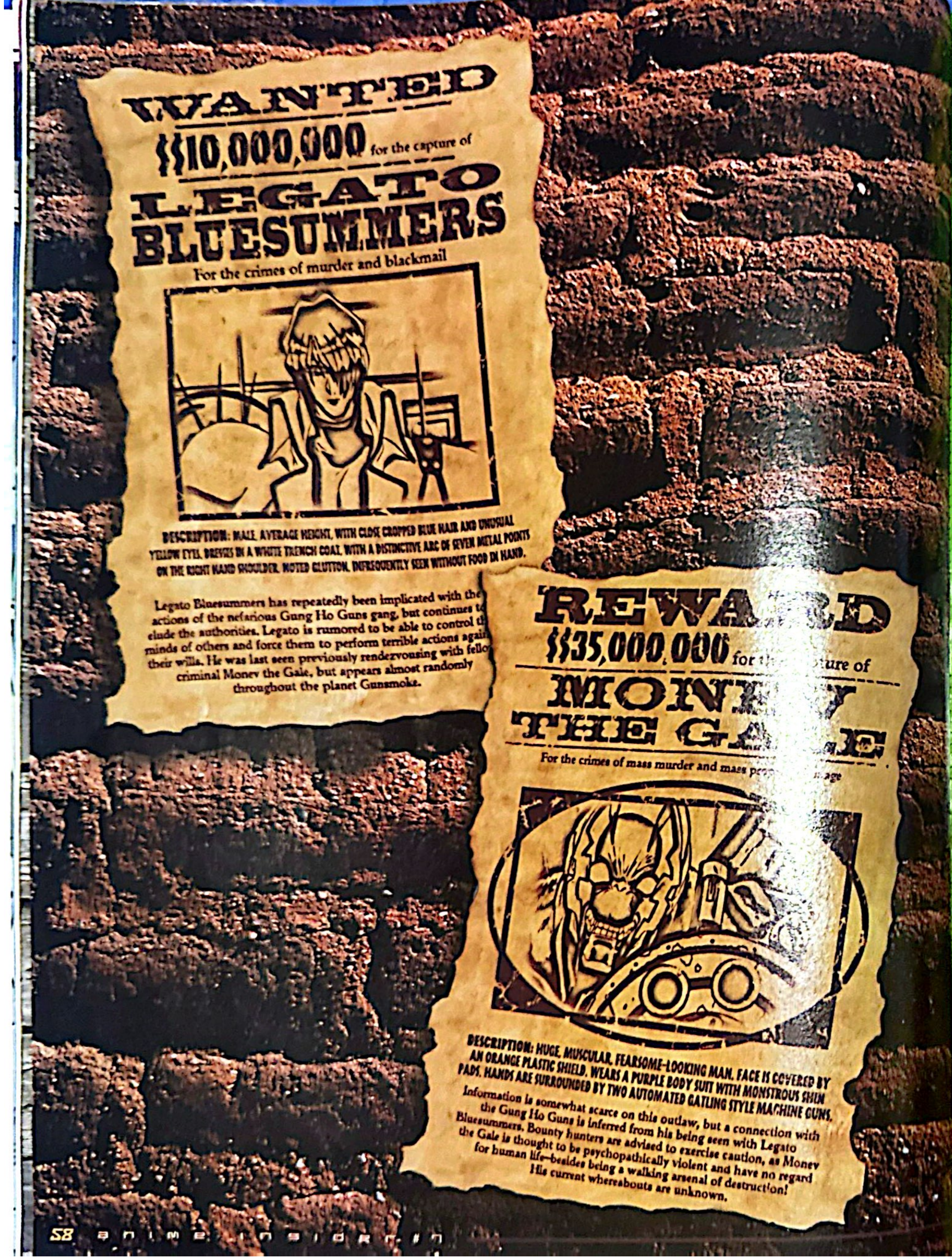

WANTED

$$10,000,000 for the capture of

LEGATO BLUESUMMERS

For the crimes of murder and blackmail

DESCRIPTION: MALE, AVERAGE HEIGHT, WITH CLOSE CROPPED BLUE HAIR AND UNUSUAL YELLOW EYES. DRESSES IN A WHITE TRENCH COAT, WITH A DISTINCTIVE ARC OF SEVEN METAL POINTS ON THE RIGHT HAND SHOULDER. NOTED GLUTTON, INFREQUENTLY SEEN WITHOUT FOOD IN HAND.

Legato Bluesummers has repeatedly been implicated with the actions of the nefarious Gung Ho Guns gang, but continues t elude the authorities. Legato is rumored to be able to control th minds of others and force them to perform terrible actions agai their wills. He was last seen previously rendezvousing with fello criminal Monev the Gale, but appears almost randomly throughout the planet Gunsmoke.

REWARD

$$35,000,000 for the capture of

MONEV THE GALE

For the crimes of mass murder and mass property damage

DESCRIPTION: HUGE, MUSCULAR, FEARSOME-LOOKING MAN. FACE IS COVERED BY AN ORANGE PLASTIC SHIELD. WEARS A PURPLE BODY SUIT WITH MONSTROUS SHIN PADS. HANDS ARE SURROUNDED BY TWO AUTOMATED GATLING STYLE MACHINE GUNS.

Information is somewhat scarce on this outlaw, but a connection with the Gung Ho Guns is inferred from his being seen with Legato Bluesummers. Bounty hunters are advised to exercise caution, as Monev the Gale is thought to be psychopathically violent and have no regard for human life—besides being a walking arsenal of destruction! His current whereabouts are unknown.

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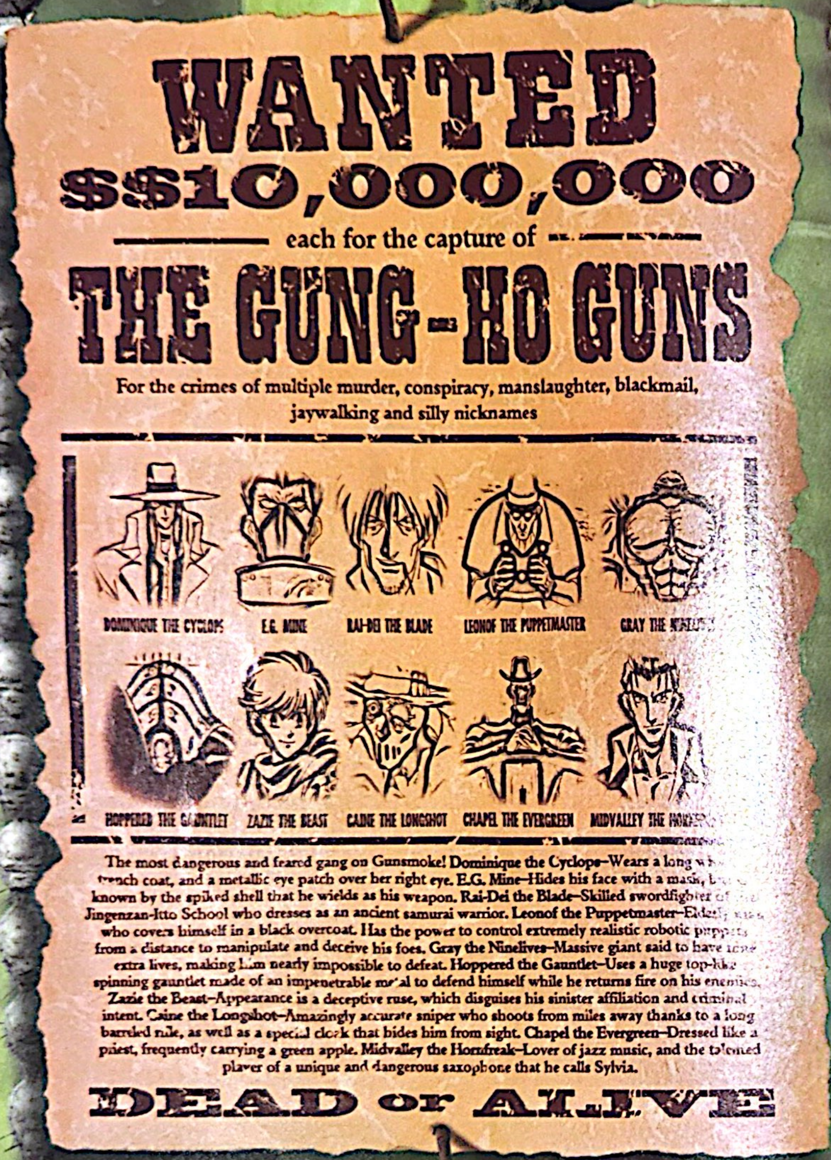


WANTED

$$10,000,000

each for the capture of

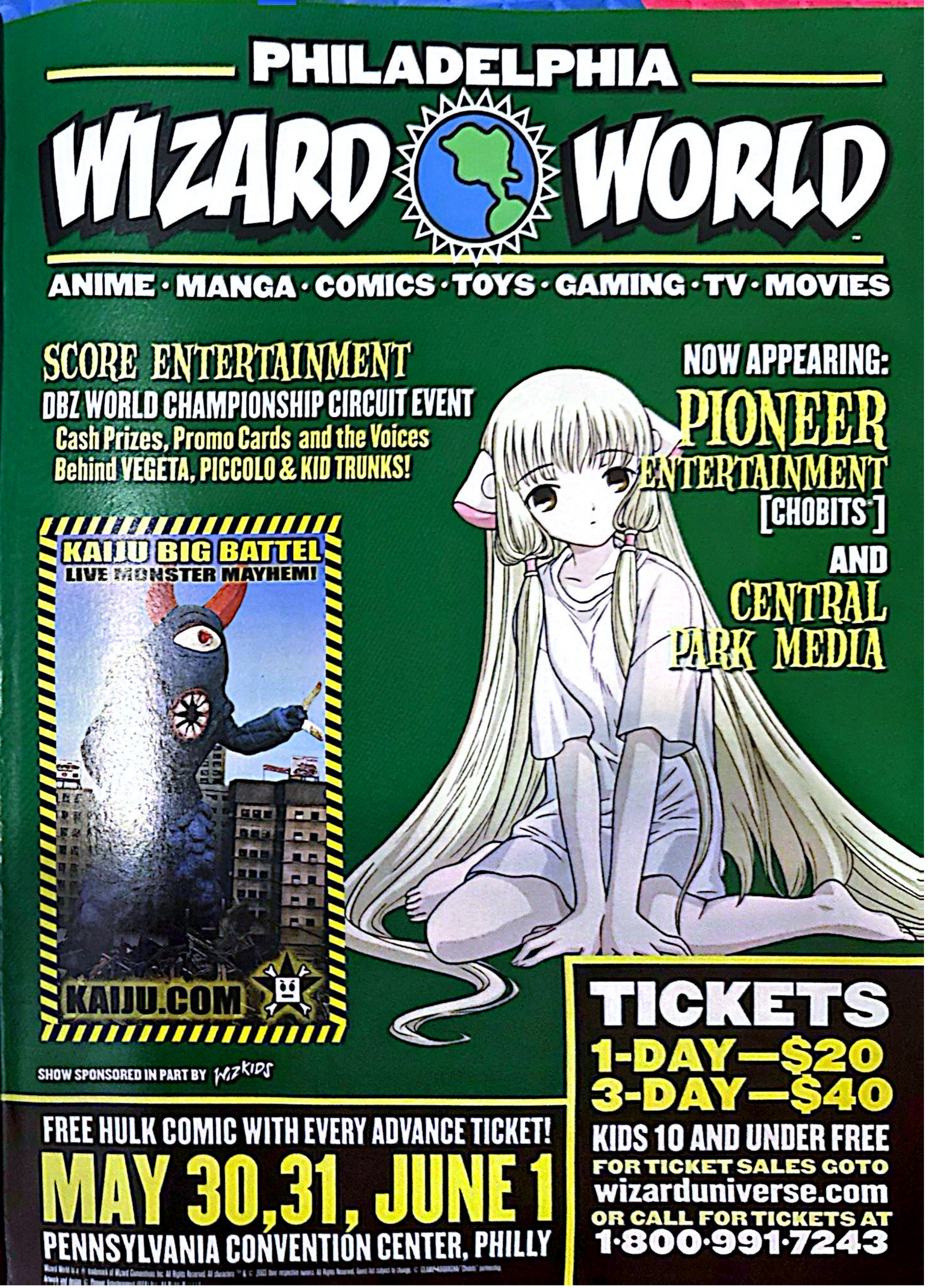
THE GUNG-HO GUNS

For the crimes of multiple murder, conspiracy, manslaughter, blackmail, jaywalking and silly nicknames

DOMINIQUE THE CYCLOPS
E.G. MINE
RAI-DEI THE BLADE
LEONOF THE PUPPETMASTER
GRAY THE NINELIVES
HOPPERED THE GAUNTLET
ZAZIE THE BEAST
CAINE THE LONGSHOT
CHAPEL THE EVERGREEN
MIDVALLEY THE HORNFREAK

The most dangerous and feared gang on Gunsmoke! **Dominique the Cyclops**–Wears a long white trench coat, and a metallic eye patch over her right eye. **E.G. Mine**–Hides his face with a mask, but is known by the spiked shell that he wields as his weapon. **Rai-Dei the Blade**–Skilled swordfighter of the Jingenzan-Itto School who dresses as an ancient samurai warrior. **Leonof the Puppetmaster**–Elderly man who covers himself in a black overcoat. Has the power to control extremely realistic robotic puppets from a distance to manipulate and deceive his foes. **Gray the Ninelives**–Massive giant said to have nine extra lives, making him nearly impossible to defeat. **Hoppered the Gauntlet**–Uses a huge top-like spinning gauntlet made of an impenetrable metal to defend himself while he returns fire on his enemies. **Zazie the Beast**–Appearance is a deceptive ruse, which disguises his sinister affiliation and criminal intent. **Caine the Longshot**–Amazingly accurate sniper who shoots from miles away thanks to a long barreled rifle, as well as a special cloak that hides him from sight. **Chapel the Evergreen**–Dressed like a priest, frequently carrying a green apple. **Midvalley the Hornfreak**–Lover of jazz music, and the talented player of a unique and dangerous saxophone that he calls Sylvia.

DEAD or ALIVE



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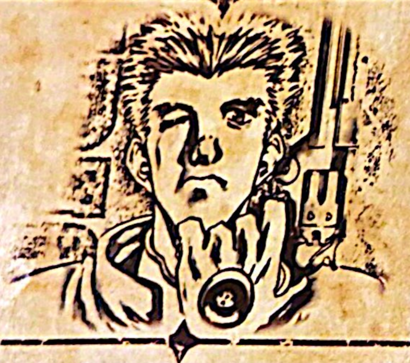
WANTED

MILLIONS KNIVES

DEAD or ALIVE!

For the crimes of racketeering, conspiracy, sabotage and mass murder



DESCRIPTION: MALE, WITH SHORT WHITE HAIR, BLUE EYES, UNNERVINGLY CALM, DRESSES IN A RED JUMPSUIT, USES A BLACK .45 LONG COLT REVOLVER. EXCEEDINGLY DANGEROUS!

Resembling Vash the Stampede almost totally, Knives is far less destructive and infinitely more murderous. Knives is obsessed with two things: 1) destroying Vash the Stampede, and 2) killing everyone on the planet–but not necessarily in that order.

The mastermind behind the organization and operation of the deadly Gung Ho Guns, whom he created for the purpose of torturing Vash–and who have killed countless innocents in their pursuit. Millions Knives remains the most elusive wanted man of all; although his whereabouts are totally unknown, it is certain that he and Vash the Stampede will eventually cross paths once again.

$$10,000,000,000

★ ★ ★ ★ CHICAGO ★ ★ ★ ★

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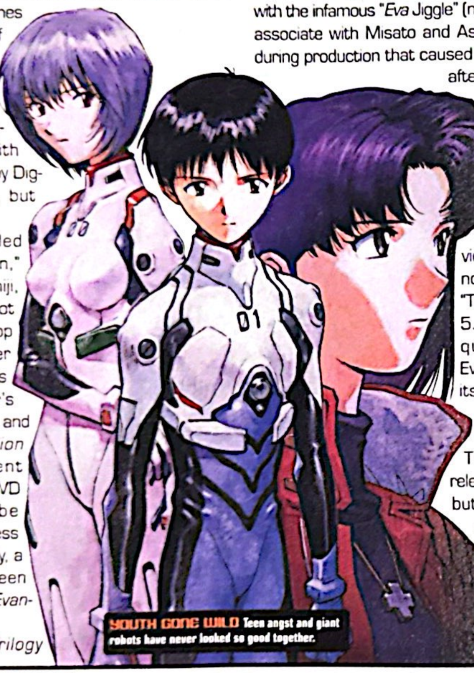
THAT'S SOME NERV!

GAINAX ANNOUNCES 'EVANGELION' DIRECTOR'S CUT—WITH NEW FOOTAGE!

Just when it seemed that the fervor surrounding Gainax's mega-popular and controversial giant robot series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* had finally started to die down, from out of Japan comes the biggest announcement of 2003! Studio Gainax, together with original director Hideaki Anno, is going to re-release Evangelion on DVD—not only with re-mastered video and Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, but brand-new footage!

Under the project called "The Renewal of Evangelion," the tale of 14-year-old Shiniji, who discovers he must pilot the robot Evangelion to stop the apocalypse, has never looked so good. The DVDs will contain the Director's Cuts of TV episodes 21-24, and well as the two *Evangelion* movies, which represent episodes 25 and 26. A DVD of bonus footage will be included with trailers, textless opening, and most excitingly, a special, a never-before-seen live-action version of the *Evangelion* movies.

Like the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* movies of 1997, Gainax has opted to brighten the colors and use advanced digital restoration technology to clean the images up. Fans of the show are intimately familiar with the infamous "*Eva* Jiggle" (no, not the same jiggle that fans associate with Misato and Asuka), an error that occurred during production that caused the image to "jump" a little bit after every cut. This very distracting problem has plagued the series since 1996—even when transferred to DVD—and it's one of the first things Gainax sought to fix. The result? A jitter-free Evangelion, enabling the viewer to focus on the show and not on the technical problems. "The re-mastered video and new 5.1 audio creates a reference-quality archival copy of the Evangelion animation worthy of its influence and importance," says noted anime expert John Oppliger of AnimeNation.com. The DVD box set will be released in Japan on June 25th—but like most Japanese DVDs, will only be playable on a Region [illegible] DVD player (American DVD players are Region 1). No American release date has been set. ■ Zac Bertschy


YOUTH GONE WILD Teen angst and giant robots have never looked so good together.

FAST FORWARD

QUICK PEEKS AT THE NEXT BIG VIDEOS

CHEERIO, GHIBLI! British anime fans are in for a real treat. The UK is set to receive DVD versions of six Studio Ghibli classics, including *Castle in the Sky*, *Porco Rosso*, *Pom Poko*, *Only Yesterday*, *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Whisper of the Heart*. While only two of these titles are set for a US release, this announcement makes an American release seem close.

PIYO PIYO DVD *Maison Ikkoku*, Rumiko Takahashi's beloved romantic comedy series, is finally coming to DVD in July. *Maison Ikkoku* is about a boarding house containing: one goofy, love-struck student; the demure, young but widowed apartment manager he's fallen for; and several totally insane residents who do nothing but mess with their budding relationship.

LICENSED BY NOW Bandai and Pioneer recently snapped up the American rights to two extra-popular series, the science-fiction *s.CRY.ed* and the Cowboy Bebop-esque *Licensed by Royal* (or L/R, to those who prefer acronyms), respectively. *s.CRY.ed* is due out this summer, while L/R is only assured for 2003. ■ ZB

S.CRY.ED

HOME-GROWN ANIME

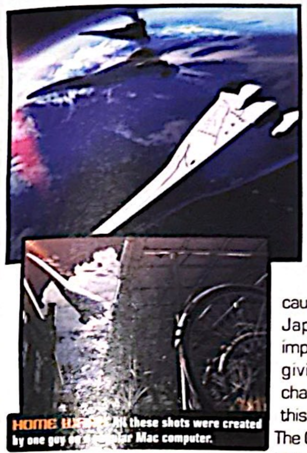
HOW MAKOTO SHINKAI BECAME AN ANIME SUPERSTAR WITHOUT LEAVING HIS HOUSE

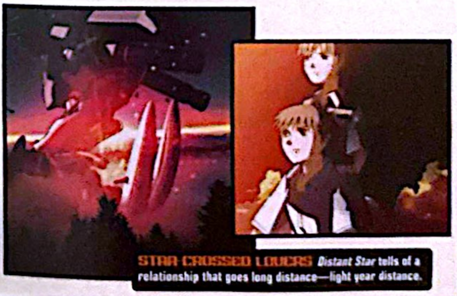
Some anime fans draw fan art, but others make their own anime! Anyone who wants to get into making anime should know about Makoto Shinkai—an animation hobbyist in Japan, who wrote, directed, produced, animated, edited and did voice-work for the science-fiction short *Voices of a Distant Star* entirely on his Power Mac at home in Japan. The 25-minute OVA episode caught on like wildfire in Japan and thoroughly impressed ADV Films—giving Americans a chance to be ignited by it this summer.

The OVA follows Mikako, a high school mecha pilot, as she's [illegible]ed to fight a war in the deepest reaches of space. She separates from her boyfriend, Noboru, back on Earth, and communicates with him via cell phone text messages. The further out she travels, the longer it takes for the messages to reach him, and the more strained their romance becomes. *Voices of a Distant Star* packs a serious emotional punch; the romance between Mikako and Noboru is the focus of the show, and is captivating in spite of its short length.

"Shinkai proves all you need is talent, inspiration, a computer and a whole lot of dedication and you can make something this fantastic!" says Chad Townsend, senior concept artist for ADV Films. "It is truly inspiring and makes me want to accomplish this at least once in my life."

American fans can look forward to seeing this "ground roots" anime in June. Pay close attention—and maybe someday you can make your own anime! ■ ZB

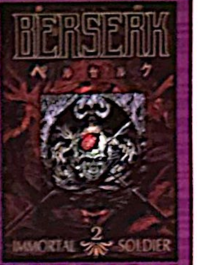

HOME W[illegible] [illegible] these shots were created by one guy on a [illegible]lar Mac computer.


STAR-CROSSED LOVERS *Distant Star* tells of a relationship that goes long distance—light year distance.

EASTERN EGGS

HIDDEN SECRETS OF YOUR FAVORITE DVDS REVEALED!

BERSERK VOL. 2 *(Media Blasters)* Select "Extras" from the main menu. If you press the left arrow key on your remote right when the Extras menu pops up, you'll see a special symbol highlighted that wasn't there before. If you select it, you'll be treated to a rather compromising portrait of the terrifying and mysterious Nosferatu Zodd!



COWBOY BEBOP 6
BANDAI
DVD

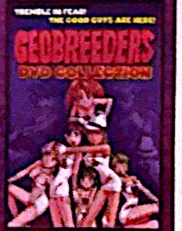
COWBOY BEBOP VOL. 6 *(Bandai)* Interested in an image gallery totally dedicated to everyone's favorite Welsh Corgi, Ein? Check out the image gallery under the "Extras" section. Then, press Left 6 times. This will highlight part of Ein's visor. Press enter to enjoy a wealth of Ein shots!

DRAGONBALL Z MOVIE 6: RETURN OF COOLER *(FUNimation)* If you're watching the movie in Japanese and selected your audio via the menu, you'll get a special treat after the final credits roll. Make sure you selected "Japanese Audio" from the Audio menu (and didn't just change it to Japanese from English via the remote during the film), and you'll see a Japanese language preview for *Dragon Ball Z Movie 7*!

DRAGONBALL Z
THE RETURN OF COOLER

Fruits Basket

FRUITS BASKET VOL. 1 *(FUNimation)* To see a few hilarious clips of the English voice actors messing up their lines, go to the "Character Profiles" section of your DVD. Enter the following button combination: Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Enter.



GEOBREEDERS *(Central Park Media)* If you press the "search" button on your DVD remote during the credits for Episode 2, you'll get to a hidden commercial for something called "Cat Energizer"! This bizarre commercial, considered to be the sister product of "Lu Lu", which is shown in the series, features a guest appearance from Maya, whom you may know from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*! ■ ZB

ON THE SHELF

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR ANIME STORES THIS SUMMER?

MAY

BERSERK VOL. 6

The dark and bloody conclusion of Kentaro Miura's fantasy masterpiece *Berserk*. See what comes of Griffith's fall into darkness, and what ultimately happens to his band of once-proud White Hawks. (Media Blasters, DVD, $29.95)

BRIGADOON VOL. 1

This off-kilter comedy series follows the adventures of Marin, a girl whose imagination can't be contained. One day, she's visited by a menacing alien... and is saved by a mysterious robot! Even Marin couldn't have dreamt this up! (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.99)

CRYING FREEMAN VOL. 2: A TASTE OF REVENGE

This classic anime series continues, following the angst-riddled, revenge-driven tale of an unwilling assassin. Originally distributed by Streamline Pictures, ADV is now giving this series the deluxe treatment on DVD. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

CARD CAPTOR SAKURA VOL. 15: REALIZATIONS

Ever closer to a tender confession, Li and Sakura get trapped in an elevator and their feelings for each other nearly reach a breaking point. To top it off, Keroberos and Yue can't change into their "street clothes!" (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

CASSHAN: ROBOT HUNTER VOL. 1

Mankind has been enslaved by a nefarious band of super-powered robots. Their only hope? Casshan, a boy struggling to clear his father's name, who takes on the powers of those he seeks to destroy in order to deliver humanity from chaos. (ADV Films, DVD, $24.98)

CHOBITS VOL. 2: THE EMPTY CITY

What starts out as a comic misadventure featuring Chii performing in a peep show turns into a catastrophic event, with Hideki discovering more about Chii's strange powers and his loyalty to her being tested. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

RANDOM ACCESS MEMORIES Cute *Chobits* processing unit Chi only crashes when she trips and fall down.

DESCENDANTS OF DARKNESS VOL. 3: TAROT CURSE

The cold-hearted Muraki, who has been terrorizing Tsuzuki and Hisoka since the first volume, turns up dead on a cruise liner. It's up to the detectives to find out what's going on. Is [illegible] really dead? (Central Park Med[illegible] DVD, $29.98)

DEVIL LADY V[illegible] THE GATHERING

Jun has been strug[illegible] what she's become, a monstrous dem[illegible] overcome her inner struggle and sav[illegible] from a horrifying threat? (ADV F[illegible]D, $29.98)

DRAGON BAL[illegible]. 3 & 4: BABY

While searching f[illegible]agon Balls in space, Goku, Trunks and [illegible]ve encountered an unstoppable alien [illegible] with horrifying powers. Now the alien [illegible]ing over the minds of their friends—one [illegible]e! (FUNimation, DVD, $24.95)

FANCY LALA VOL. 5

The *Fancy Lala* saga is complete with this final volume. Things start coming to a head and the mystery behind Lala's powers of transformation from little girl to idol singer is revealed! (Bandai, DVD, $24.98)

GENESHAFT VOL. 1

Genshaft centers around a distant future where a strange ring has appeared near Earth. Facing imminent destruction, the human race is forced to evolve into near-perfect beings. (Bandai, DVD, $29.98)

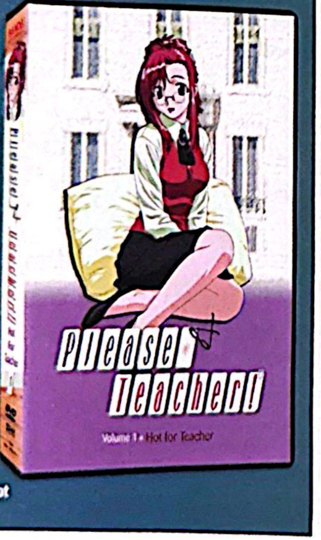
HOT PICK

PLEASE, TEACHER VOL. 1: HOT FOR TEACHER

May 6th on DVD, $59.98

Bandai Entertainment

Already a huge hit in Japan, Bandai is betting this romantic comedy will catch on in America as well. The show follows the adventures of Kei, a student who, while snooping around the lake at night, spies a beautiful female alien. The next day at school, he discovers that he's got a new teacher; one with a striking resemblance to the alien he saw! Scared at first, Kei finds himself slowly falling in love with his new intergalactic instructor, and decides to help her protect her identity. The animation in this series is incredibly detailed and lush, and should please even the most discerning animation critic. Clocking in at 13 episodes long (with an OVA series still being released in Japan), the first volume of *Please, Teacher* contains the first four episodes. This loaded special edition box set comes with an art box to hold all the *Please, Teacher* DVDs, the anime soundtrack, some postcards and a special trial-size version of the manga. It's also available as a stand alone DVD for half the price. Either way, American fans are sure to learn a lot from this release! ■ ZB



GOEMON VOL. 1: LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA

Based on Konami's popular *Goemon* videogames, this anime series follows the hilarious adventures of the Mystical Ninja himself. The first volume even comes with an art box to hold the entire series! (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

GREAT TEACHER ONIZUKA VOL. 8

The ever-continuing saga of the Greatest Teacher in the history of Japan, Eikichi Onizuka, rolls ahead. A trip to Okinawa, a run-in with Yakuza and a wedding are all on this syllabus. (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.99)

.HACK://SIGN VOL. 2: OUTCAST SPECIAL EDITION

The second volume of Bandai's newest hit series comes with a limited edition soundtrack album! The mysteries of The World are still unraveling, and Tsukasa is the only one who knows the secret! (Bandai, DVD, $39.98)

JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE VOL. 2

The vampire Dio has returned and gathered a force of Stand warriors of his own to fight Jotaro and his allies. Can they rescue Jotaro's mother from Dio! (Super [illegible]hno Arts, DVD, $24.99)

MAZINKAISER VOL.1

The most recent version of Go Nagai's famous *Mazinger Z* series, *Mazinkaiser* follows a powered-up version of Mazinger as he battles it out with Dr. Hell, the main villain from previous incarnations of *Mazinger*. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

MEDABOTS VOL. 9

Another handful of robot-battling fun with the Medabots and their enthusiastic Elementary School trainers. Who will make it to the World Robattle Tournament? (ADV Films, DVD, $19.98)

NOIR VOL. 3: FIRING CHAMBER

When Mireille and Kirika get their latest assignment, it seems someone beat them to the punch. Chloe, the third deadly assassin to populate the *Noir* world, makes her first appearance. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

PATLABOR TV VOL. 5

The hit series that spawned three amazing and critically acclaimed movies continues on DVD. Check out the further adventures of the Patlabor team here as they keep the peace with their mighty mecha. (Central Park Media, DVD, $29.98)

BE COOL Great Teacher Onizuka wants *you* to stay in school.

RAHXEPHON ORCHESTRATION 2

More secrets are uncovered, but the answers only raise more questions as to the mysterious nature of RahXephon. Will Ayato ever see his family again? (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

READ OR DIE

Yomiko Readman—who has the power to control paper—and her cohorts must stop evil historic figures from stealing rare books. Sound weird? It *is* weird, but it's a brilliant, beautiful show to boot! (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $29.95)

REVOLUTIONARY GIRL UTENA VOL.6

With the secrets of the Black Rose organization revealed, all that's left is for Utena to find out what's really going on at Ohtori Academy. (Central Park Media, DVD, $29.99)

SAINT TAIL VOL. 6

Japan's most infamous magical thief girl sees her series conclude. The story comes to a full boil, and Saint Tail herself will be put to the ultimate test—should she quit being a thief? (TOKYOPOP, DVD, $29.98)

SAKURA WARS OVA COLLECTION

The entire *Sakura Wars* OVA series collected in to one complete set. See how the Flower Brigade was formed, and how the gullible Oogami handles six fighting women at once! (ADV Films, DVD, $49.98)

USHIO & TORA: COMPLETE COLLECTION

Ushio was a regular school kid until he awakened a legendary demon in his basement that his ancestor trapped there years ago! What will his schoolmates think of his new "best friend"—Tora, a vicious demon? (ADV Films, DVD, $39.98)

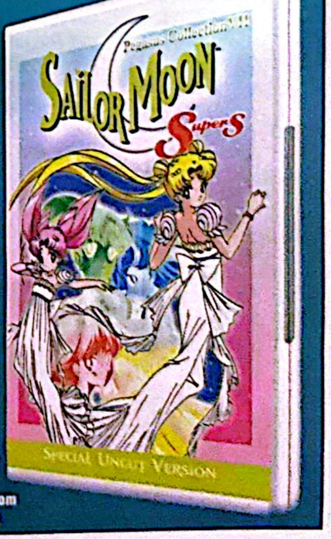
HO[illegible]PICK

SAIL[illegible] MOON SUPER S: THE PEGASUS COL[illegible]TION VOL. 7

May 1[illegible] DVD, $29.98

Pionee[illegible]ation

How c[illegible]t commemorate the end of a sail[illegible] era? *Sailor Moon Super S: The Peg[illegible] Collection Volume 7* marks the end of the *Sailor Moon Super S* season, and since the final season, *Sailor Moon Sailor Stars*, hasn't been licensed in America yet, this could be the final Sailor Moon release in the United States. So Sailor Moon fans, relish this release; it's presumably the last new product you'll be getting for a long, long time. With that in mind, you'll finally find out exactly how the Scouts crush the cackling Queen Neherenia (say that 3 times fast). Rini, a.k.a. Chibi-Usa, who has a whole subscription's worth of issues to work out, Pegasus himself makes a major sacrifice, and Sailor Moon finds out that just using whatever glowing, music-playing magic bauble that's bestowed upon her isn't always the best way to take out a super villain. Could this be the end of one of the most popular anime series of all time? Will American television ethics prevent millions of rabid, foaming Sailor Moon fans from getting their fix? Only time will tell! ■ ZB



VIRTUA FIGHTER VOL. 1

Sega's smash hit arcade fighter comes home in this action-packed anime series! See all your favorite Virtua Fighters in fully-animated glory, battling it out for total supremacy! (Media Blasters, DVD, $39.95)

YU-GI-OH! VOL. 9 & 10

More card-flinging adventures with Yugi and his band of game-playing maniacs. Seto Kaiba may be down, but he's not out. And what does Maximillion Pegasus have to do with this? (FUNimation, DVD, $19.95 each)

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST! MINI-SPECIALS VOL. 1

These highly comic 10-minute vignettes follows two female cops as they chase down criminals and boyfriends in their suped-up car. If you're a fan of the movies or TV show, check them out here in a short series of decidedly less-serious police adventures. (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

ZONE OF ENDERS: DOLORES, I VOL. 4

Based on the hit PlayStation 2 game. The pressure is on James Links as he struggles to maintain his sanity and stay in the fight. Will the family stay together? (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

JUNE

AI YORI AOSHI VOL. 3: HUGS AND KISSES

The hijinks of Kaoru Hanabishi and his arranged bride-to-be Aoi Sakuraba continue. Will Aoi have her way with Kaoru? Can Kaoru fend off the legions of other women who continuously try and sink their claws in to him? (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

ARGENTOSOMA VOL. 2

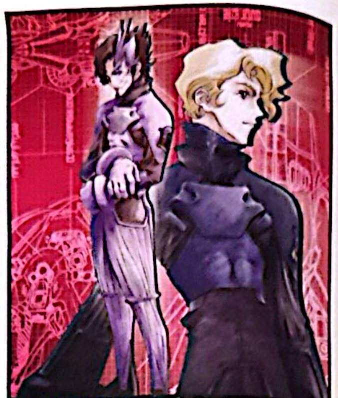
Takuto is left with only blood-soaked revenge on his mind after his girlfriend and mentor are killed in a horrible accident. He joins the FUNERAL organization, and becomes Ryu Soma, determined to destroy the invading aliens! (Bandai, $29.98, DVD)

BLUE SUBMARINE NO. 6 SPECIAL EDITION

Renowned for its groundbreaking animation techniques, *Blue Submarine No. 6* is hailed as one of the best-animated features ever produced. (Bandai, DVD, $34.98)

CREST OF THE STARS: COLLECTOR'S BOX SET

TFollowing a successful run on TechTV's Anime Unleashed and hailed as one of the most intelligent science-fiction shows on the market, *Crest of the Stars* won't fail to please even the most jaded anime fan. (Bandai, DVD, $49.98)


WORTH 1000 WORDS Ryu Soma (left) and Dan Simmons (right) get their Sears family portrait taken between alien hunts in *ArgentoSoma.*

CITY HUNTER: BAY CITY WARS & MILLION DOLLAR CONSPIRACY

Two collected *City Hunter* movies on one disc! *Bay City Wars* finds lecherous detective Ryo Saeba in an action-packed, *Die Hard*-esque situation. *Million Dollar Conspiracy* is heavy on the humor, with Ryo protecting a mysterious woman who's willing to [illegible] something other than cash! (ADV Fi[illegible] $29.98)

DRAGON BAL[illegible]CCOLO BOX SET

This time, we [illegible] ku pitted against King Piccolo, [illegible] deadliest enemies to ever inhab[illegible] Ball universe. (FUNimation[illegible]9.95)

DRAGON BAL[illegible] BOX SET

Join Gohan, Vegeta [illegible] as they try to stop the evil wizard Ba[illegible] raising the most destructive creature [illegible] universe—Majin Buu! (FUNimation, D[illegible]7.95)

EDEN'S BOWY VOL. 1

An odd mixture of fantasy, science fiction, comedy and drama. A young boy wonders at the two cities floating in the sky—until they send agents to kill him! (ADV Films, DVD, $39.98)

GATEKEEPERS 21 VOL.2: THE FINAL GATE

More exciting adventures with the new team at AEGIS. Ayane continues her struggle with using the Gate powers of her father's legacy. Will she put her neurosis aside in time to take out the resurrected Kaiser Kikai? (Pioneer, DVD, $29.98)

HOT PICK

FULL METAL PANIC! VOL. 1

June 10th on DVD, $44.98
ADV Films

FULL METAL PANIC
FMP

Gonzo Digimation, the studio responsible for the hugely popular series *Vandread* and *Hellsing*, have released their most impressive series yet. *Full Metal Panic!* focuses on Kadame Chidori, a high school girl who's convinced that she's as normal as they come. Along comes Sagara Sosuke, an agent of MITHRIL, whose mission is to make sure no harm comes to Chidori. This wouldn't be a major problem, except that Sosuke has absolutely zero social skills and his military-trained personality gets him and Chidori into a lot of trouble. A nuisance at first, Sosuke winds up getting closer to Chidori and as the plot progresses, the mystery behind what makes Chidori so special is revealed. With unparalleled animation for a television production, top-notch mix of action, comedy and some of the best screenwriting to come along in years, *Full Metal Panic!* should be tops on anyone's must-see list. The first volume is available as a stand-alone disc or as a special edition box that comes with a t-shirt. Fans of all ages and types will find something to love about *Full Metal Panic!*, so be sure to check this one out. ■ ZB

IF I SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS TV

The beautiful Nagisa, one of the most sought-after women in Misou's life, seems like she's only interested in him... now he has to struggle to win her back! (Media Blasters, DVD, $24.95)

KO BEAST VOL. 1: PASSWORD TO TREASURE!

A spunky band of adventure-minded anthropomorphic animals are the star of *KO Beast.* Will Dr. Password be able to keep the nefarious Czar Master from destroying all the Beasts on earth? (Right Stuf, DVD, $24.95)

MACHINE ROBO VOL. 1

When the peaceful planet Cronos is invaded by the aggressive robots of Gandora, Rom and his Mecha Army must save the day. Good for all fans of fighting, transformable robots. (Central Park Media, DVD, $19.99)

MASTER KEATON VOL.1: EXCAVATION

Sort of an animated version of *Matlock*, Master Keaton chronicles the mystery-solving exploits of a famous archaeology lecturer and freelance detective, who is trying to discover ancient treasures while being a good parent! (Pioneer, DVD, $2[illegible]8)

MIRAGE OF BLAZE VOL. 1

Takaya is your average tormented pretty boy, until he finds out that he's actually the reincarnation of one of Japan's deadliest warlords from the Sengoku era, and he's destined to fight once again. (Media Blasters, DVD, $24.95)

MOBILE FIGHTER G-GUNDAM BOX SET 4

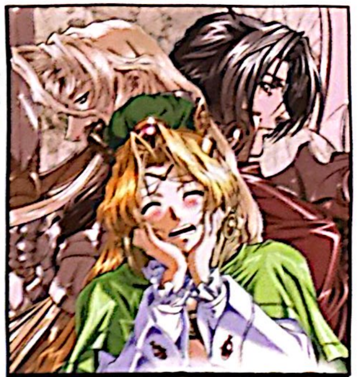
G Gundam comes to a decidedly explosive conclusion in this final box set! Domon and his Burning Gundam have made it to the Tournament finals, but the Dark Gundam has finally arisen—and it has Rain captured in its heart! (Bandai, DVD, $49.98)

REIGN THE CONQUEROR VOL. 3: AN EMPIRE FROM ASHES

Arriving in Egypt, Alexander is visited with a vision by an oracle that spells out his own downfall and death. (TokyoPop, DVD, $29.99)

RUNE SOLDIER VOL. 2: ADVENTURE FOR DUMMIES

The continuing adventures of the bumbling sorcerer Louie and his spunky female sidekicks. Can Melissa, Genie and Merrill keep him in line long enough to finish their quest? (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)


LOUIE, LOUIE Adventuring braggart Louie (right) has a new rival in *Rune Soldier*, and Melissa (bottom) only has heartburn.

SAIYUKI VOL. 2

Will the chain-smoking priest Sanzo be able to keep the monkey king, Goku under control long enough to stop whoever's trying to unleash the demon god Gyumao? (ADV Films, DVD, $29.98)

SAMURAI DEEPER KYO VOL. 1

Bounty hunter Yuyu Shiina runs across a mysterious man she thinks is the legendary outlaw Onime-no-Kyo, but when the man is cornered, he transforms! Comes with art box! (Media Blasters, DVD, $44.95)

STEAM DETECTIVES VOL. 1

Based on Kia Asamiya's smash-hit comic book series, *Steam Detectives* chronicles the case files of Narutaki and his butler Kawakubo, two investigators who assist the Steam City police in solving crimes. Comes with art box! (ADV Films, DVD, $35.98)

SUGAR VOL. 2: FRIENDS AND DREAMS

The super-saccharine exploits of Sugar and her posse of ridiculously cute fairy friends continues as she learns about what it takes to be a true friend. (Pioneer, DVD, $29.99)

SUPER GALS! VOL. 1 WITH BOX

Enjoy the hijinks of super-popular fashion plate Kotobuki Ran and her gang of raucous teens as they terrorize Tokyo's snobbiest high school girls. (ADV Films, DVD, $39.98)

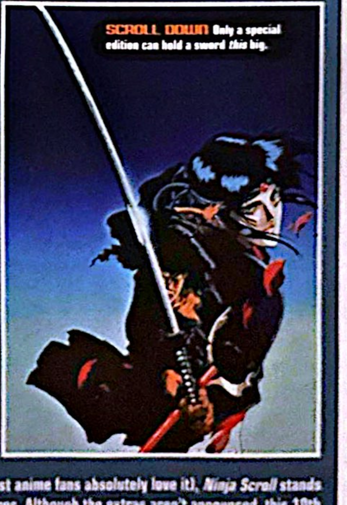
VIRUS VOL. 3

The S.T.A.N.D. forces face their biggest threat yet. Expect more weapons, more battles, and yes, more girls! (Manga Entertainment, DVD, $24.95)

HOT PICK

NINJA SCROLL: 10TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

June 2[illegible] $34.98
Manga Entertainment

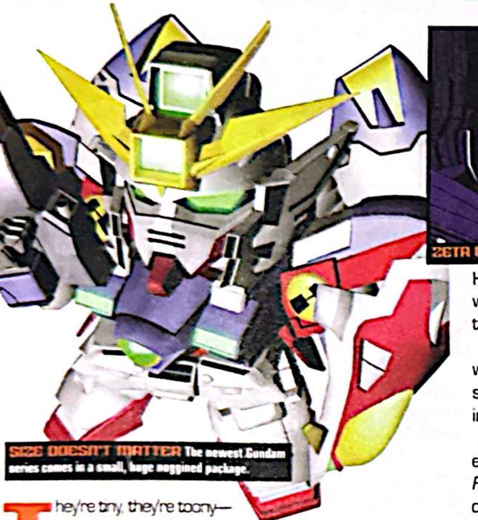

SCROLL DOWN Only a special edition can hold a sword *this* big.

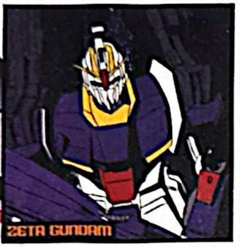
The increasingly popular *Ninja Scroll*, Madhouse's [illegible] violent and ultra-popular one-shot [illegible] OVA episode, celebrates its 10th anniversary with the release of this special edition DVD. Here's a quick rundown: Jubei Kibagami is a *ronin* (or masterless samurai, for you non-*Rurouni Kenshin* fans out there) with amazing combat skill. He meets up with Kagero, a female ninja with poisonous skin, a result of having spent her whole life tasting poisons. They join forces with Dakuwan, a government spy, to investigate a team of eight "demons" known to be bringing a plague upon the land. Lushly animated with the finest attention to gory detail, *Ninja Scroll* has earned its place in history as one of the most violent anime ever created—and it's the epitome of the craziness of anime, as character deaths involve anything from rivers of molten gold to being filled with bees! Love it or hate it (and most anime fans absolutely love it), *Ninja Scroll* stands as the finest anime in the action/gore genres. Although the extras aren't announced, this 10th anniversary collection is sure to be packed with bonuses. Plus, it'll tide you over till the *Ninja Scroll* TV series comes out on DVD later this year. ■ ZB

TELEVISION

SMALL WONDERS

TWO NEW SHOWS MAKE 'GUNDAM' CORRUPT AND DEFORMED


SIZE DOESN'T MATTER The newest Gundam series comes in a small, huge noggined package.


ZETA GUNDAM

They're tiny, they're toony—and they're ready to kick a whole lot of butt this fall. They're the super-deformed Gundams—stars of the newest Gundam series *Superior Defender*.

Superior Defender is a humorous Gundam story, starring pint-sized mecha from three different worlds. The Mobile, Knight and Musha Defenders must join forces to fight the evil Dark Axis, an implacable but vertically challenged foe. The *Superior Defender* Gundam series will debut on Cartoon Network in Fall 2003. The tiny Gundams are already a sensation in Japan; in 1988, an SD Gundam—short for "Super Deformed," a popular style of squishing characters for humorous effect—TV series aired to excellent ratings, with a 10-part OVA series proving so popular that two movies and countless SD Gundam toys were made. However, *Superior Defender*—and the accompanying toys—will be brand-new, and both are set to premiere in Japan this summer.

"'SD' Gundams are already a big hit in Japan, and we're ecstatic to launch them this year in the United States," said Bill Beebe, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Bandai America Inc.

If tiny Gundams aren't your bag, Bandai still has you covered. Also coming soon to Cartoon Network is the *Gundam F-91* movie, and *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam*. *Zeta Gundam*, originally shown in 1985, is set in between *Gundam:0083* and *Char's Counterattack*, when the Earth Federation grows corrupt, Amuro Ray and Char Aznable have to reluctantly team together for the freedom of the space colonies. *Gundam F-91* is set 30 years after *Char's Counterattack*, when the Ronah family attacks the Earth Federation, believing only nobility has the right to rule.

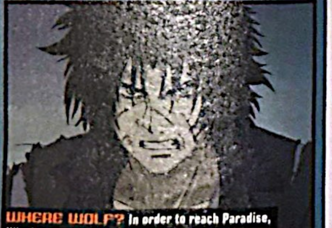
Clearly, when it comes to robot anime this Fall, size doesn't matter. ■ Robert Bricken & Colin Moriarity

TUNE IN TOKYO

CHECK OUT THE LATEST ANIME THAT'S ONLY ON THE AIR IN JAPAN

WOLF'S RAIN

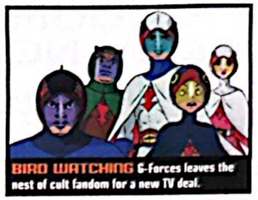
In the future, wolves are a myth, thought to have died out over 200 years ago. But wolves are the ultimate survivors—instead of extinction, they chose to adapt. Now wolves walk in human form, living unnoticed among humans—until four of these wolves in human clothing decide to seek something better. The wolf Kiba follows the scent of the Lunar Flowers—said to lead the way to Paradise—to the Flower Daughter, a mysterious girl in suspended animation who could be the key. But before Kiba can discover if she is the one he seeks, the Flower Daughter is kidnapped. Now, Kiba must join forces with three other wolves—Tsume, Hige, and Toboe—in hopes of finding the Flower Daughter. But even the combined skills of four wolves may not be enough to defeat their mysterious foe. ■ CM


WHERE WOLF? In order to reach Paradise, Kiba has to prove himself top dog...er, wolf.

THE G-FORCE IS WITH YOU

A NEW 'BATTLE OF THE PLANETS' TO BE WAGED

Call 'em whatever you want—G-Force, Gatchaman, Eagle Riders—but don't call it quits, because the series best-known in America as *Battle of the Planets* is coming back to TV.


BIRD WATCHING G-Forces leaves the nest of cult fandom for a new TV deal.

Due this fall, Sandy Frank Entertainment is producing a new series of half-hour *Battle of the Planets* TV episodes, drawing from the original Japanese 1970s *Science Ninja Team Gatchaman* episodes. This time, however, the series will draw from many episodes that were trimmed or left out of the original 1978-79 American broadcast entirely.

The new series is trying to stay as true to spirit of the original *Battle of the Planets* as possible. So, bad news for original *Gatchaman* fans: 7-Zark-7 will be included, but this time around, at least he won't simply be filler to replace censored scenes. Good news: Keyop won't just warble, but will talk like a regular human being—who dresses like a bird to fight evil.

No contract has been signed, but given the series' cult appeal, there's definitely a *Battle* brewing. ■ CM

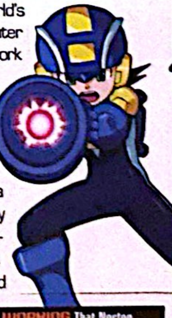
'MEGA' MANIA

KIDS' WB! BOOTS UP A BRAND NEW MEGAMAN

Your computer isn't safe—not until this summer, when *Megaman: NT Warrior* debuts on Kids WB! *NT Warrior* is not based on the regular beloved Capcom videogame character (known as Rockman in Japan), but his new incarnation as a computer program.

During the Cyber Revolution, the world's technology is linked by a single computer system. Citizens interface with this network using their NetNavigators, or NetNavis. NetNavis reflect their owner's personalities, but have enhanced technological abilities. Fifth grader Lan's NetNavi, and alter-ego, is a blue-suited cyberhero called Megaman. In a world rife with ruthless hackers and deadly viruses, Lan and Megaman must summon all their talents, skills, and resources if there is any hope to save the world from total annihilation.

The TV series debuted in Japan in March 2002 on TV Tokyo, and is still going strong. If *Megaman* meets success in America, there'll be plenty of episodes to "download." ■ CM


NET WORKING That Norton Anti-Virus guy has nuthin' on Megaman.

ON THE AIR

WHAT TO WATCH AND WHERE

ABC FAMILY

MEDABOTS

Beyblade: Weekdays 7:30 a.m.; Sat. & Sun. 7:30 & 9 a.m.
Medabots: Weekdays 7 a.m.; Sat. & Sun. 7 & 9:30 a.m.
Tokyo Pig: Sat. & Sun. 11 a.m.

CARTOON NETWORK

Toonami: Weekdays Mon.-Fri., *Zoids* 5 p.m., *G Gundam* 5:30, *Yu Yu Hakusho* 6 p.m, and *Rurouni Kenshin* at 6: 30.

RUROUNI KENSHIN

Adult Swim: Cartoon Network's late night mature programming block expands to weeknights Mon-Thurs, showing *Trigun* at 12 a.m., *Inu-Yasha* at 12:30, *Cowboy Bebop* at 1 a.m. and *Reign: The Conqueror* at 1:30.

Super Saturday: *Pokémon* at 7 p.m., *Yu-Gi-Oh!* at 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., *Zoids* at 10:30, *Dragonball* at 11, *Dragon Ball Z* at 11:30 p.m., *.hack//SIGN* at midnight, and the original *Mobile Suit Gundam* at 12:30.

Hamtaro: Weekdays at 3:30 p.m., Sun. 6 p.m.
Pokemon: Mon-Thurs. 9 p.m.

FOX BOX

Fighting Foodons: Sat. 9:30 a.m.
Kirby: Right Back At Ya!: Sat. 9 a.m.
Ultimate Muscle: Sat. 10 a.m.
Ultraman Tiga: Sat. 11:30 a.m.

KIRBY

INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL

Dragon Ball GT: Sat. 10:30 p.m.
El Hazard: Wed. 11 p.m.
Fushigi Yugi: Tues. 11 p.m.
Slayers: Fri. 11 p.m., Sat. 11 p.m.
Soul Hunter: Mon. 11 p.m.

EL HAZARD

KIDS WB!

Viewers can, as always, catch their favorite episodes of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *Pokémon* six days a week!

Pokémon: Weekdays 4 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Weekdays 4:30 p.m., Sat. 8 & 11 a.m.

TECH TV

TechTV's Anime Unleashed serves up tasty anime offerings Monday through Friday, 1 to 1:30 a.m., and Friday 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. *Silent Mobius* joins TechTV's previous offerings: *Betterman*, *Crest of the Stars* and *Serial Experiments Lain*.

SILENT MOBIUS

OTHERS

These channels air not-to-be-missed anime on irregular schedules, so check the most up-to-date listings on their Websites.

Anime Network: http://www.theanimenetwork.com.
Action Movie Channel: http://www.actionmoviechannel.com
Showtime Beyond: http://www.sho.com/beyond ■ CM

Scanned with CamScanner

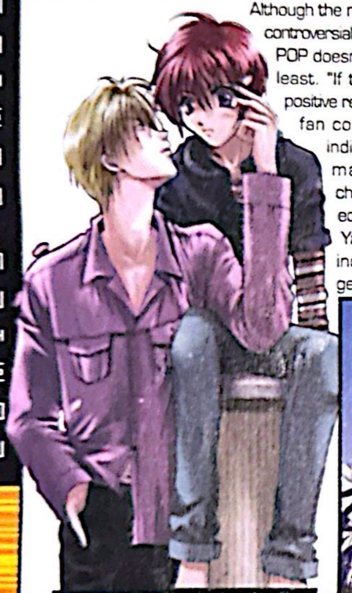
LABOR OF LOVE

TOKYOPOP CROSSES BOUNDARIES WITH BOYS' ROMANCE MANGA

Starting this May, TOKYOPOP will raise some eyebrows when they transport a new manga genre to America: yaoi, or masculine, same-sex love stories.

Although the move might seem controversial to some, TOKYOPOP doesn't think so in the least. "If the tremendous positive response from the fan community is any indication, then we made the right choice," said senior editor Jake Forbes. Yaoi manga is an incredibly popular genre both among homosexual men and women (for the bishonen—or "pretty boy"—art) in Japan, and TOKYOPOP feels the general popularity of manga in the U.S. has made importing such comics viable. "A lot of our other comics contain shonen-ai (or boys' love) elements," explained Forbes. "For instance, *Demon Diary* features a relationship between a demon lord in training and his tutor, which never goes beyond the gentle touching and gazing level."

Heading the yaoi pack are the highly-lauded *FAKE* and *Gravitation* series. Sanami Matoh's *FAKE* is the story of two police officers; when one officer's cover gets compromised, the other must take drastic steps to rescue his partner. Maki Murakami's *Gravitation* features a pretty-boy, pop star-wannabe, lacking certain finesse, who finds his answer in an attractive composer with a flair for writing lyrics. In both, the focus is primarily on the budding relationships between the main characters.



GRAVITY'S PULL *Gravitation*'s Shindou and Yuki are drawn together by more than mass.

-FAKE-
© TOKYOPOP

Although the titles contain homosexual content, TOKYOPOP is rating them with the same standards it grades its other titles, feeling that the stories are no different than any of their other romantic comics. "*FAKE* is rated Older Teens [1[illegible]] Volume 1-6; Volume 7 has explicit content and [illegible] rated Mature [18+]," said Forbes. "We [illegible] an alternate version which maintains the O[illegible] rating. *Gravitation* is rated Teen [13+] [illegible] sexual content is no more explicit than *Mar*[illegible] of our other regular, shôjo romance manga."

Although many otaku [illegible] excited, can America handle it? If so, TOKYOPOP has more yaoi in store for you. ■ Jenni[illegible]ino

QUICK READS

PAGE TURNIN' NEWS CLIPS

STARTING OVER

In an effort to gain new readers and make back issues more accessible, Viz is re-releasing volumes of several popular manga in its 2nd Edition program. The irritating part? They are differently designed and sized, so they won't match your existing collection. Look for 2nd Editions of *Dragon Ball, DBZ, Fushigi Yugi, Inu-Yasha, Ranma 1/2* and more starting this April.

ULTRA KEEN

Mega-popular Japanese superhero series *Ultraman* will be making its U.S. comics debut this summer from Dark Horse Manga. It is based on *Ultraman Tiga* (currently airing on Saturday morning via the FoxBox and 4Kids), where Ultraman is resurrected and merges with a human, Daigo, to combat the forces of darkness in 2007.

MARVEL'S MANGA-KA

Marvel's manga-influenced Tsunami series is doing so well they're doing a second batch. Notably, they're getting authentic Japanese manga artists to do their dirty work! Tsutomu Nihei, creator of the fan-favorite *Blame!*, will write and draw a six-issue limited series called *Wolverine: Snikt!* ■ JC

TURNING JAPANESE Marvel's mightiest mutant gets a new manga look.

'EXCEL'-LENT!

VIZ TO PUBLISH ORIGINAL 'EXCEL SAGA' MANGA

The surprise anime smash of 2002, *Excel Saga* is known for its insane plot and way the manga creator, Koshi Rikdo, gave his permission for the animators to wreak havoc on his stories. Now fans will get a chance to find out the real story of *Excel Saga* when Viz releases their translation of the cult hit's manga this summer.

Like the anime loosely based on it, the *Excel Saga* manga is the story of two agents—the lunatic Excel and the deathly-ill Hyatt—trying to take control of the city F for their commander Ilpalazzo, and features the same insanity *Excel Saga* has become legendary for: ridiculous plots, broad cartoon slapstick, their dog and "emergency food supply" Menchi, and parodies of popular movies, books, and anime.

The series will be overseen by veteran manga editor, Carl Horn. Currently ten volumes of the manga have been released in Japan so far; with the series going strong and gaining new readers with each new volume, American fans are next on the list. ■ JC

MANGA BY THE NUMBERS

9.95	Usual price of TOKYOPOP's manga collections
14.95	Price of Marvel Comic's *Ultimate Spider-Man: Power and Responsibility* collection
7	Years Lone Wolf and Cub was published in Japan (1970-1976)
42	Years Fantastic Four has been published (1961 to present)
8,000	Estimated amount of pages drawn for *Lone Wolf and Cub*
11,000	Estimated amount of pages drawn for *Fantastic Four*
10	Age Ash is allowed to leave home and capture wild animals in *Pokémon*
16	Age someone is allowed to drive a car in most states

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

INU-YASHA: THE MANGA VERSES THE ANIME

When a modern schoolgirl and a sullen half-dog demon from ancient Japan have to recover all the shards of a magic jewel sought by countless monsters, it adds up to one thing—*Inu-Yasha*, the newest hit from Rumiko Takahashi. But *Inu-Yasha*'s anime and manga, both out from Viz, don't always match!

OF HUMAN BONDAGE

Early in the manga, a suspicious Kaede and tied-up Kagome are together in the great outdoors. Kaede places a nice meal before them and asks why Kagome isn't chowing down. Kagome reminds her she's tied up. This weird experience isn't in the anime at all.

FETCH, BOYS!

In the second episode of the anime, when Kagome is in the hut with the ogre, she distracts him by tossing the Shikon Jewel out the window, when the bird-demon (the Bugarasu) steals it. In the anime, the ogre steals it himself, when the bird-demon bursts from his chest to take it.

FOR THE BIRDS

When the bugarasu kidnaps a small child from the village and flies off with him, the demon drops the child in a river and Kagome saves him in the anime. In the manga, Kagome wrests the child from the demon herself!

NO BONES ABOUT IT

In the anime Kagome, after an argument with Inu-Yasha, goes to a seemingly bottomless well and looks inside and thinks about their relationship. In the manga, the well definitely has a bottom—one lined with bones.

HEAD GAMES

Spoiler alert! Although the villain Urasue steals Kikyo's ashes and resurrects her in both versions, Kikyo has more anger to work out in the manga. In the anime Kikyo makes Urasue pass out and her head kind of comes off off-screen. In the manga, Kikyo blows her head entirely off! ■ JC

KAGOME & SHIPPO

Scanned with CamScanner

COMING COMICS

MANGA TO WATCH FOR THIS SUMMER!

MAY

AKIRA CINE-MANGA VOL. 3
Kaneda attempts to rescue Tetsuo, but the government will stop at nothing to keep their experiments secret. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

ALIEN 9 VOL. 1
Think your school is tough? Imagine being in sixth grade and having to save the world from alien invasion…and having to stick living aliens on your head! Hitoshi Tomizawa (CPM Manga, $15.95)

ANGEL VOL. 1
When an ordinary man picks up an angel at a bar, his life becomes extraordinary! (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

ASTRO BOY VOL. 16
The spark responsible for today's manga industry continues—Astro fights more robots, more aliens and…more. Osamu Tezuka (Dark Horse, $9.95)

BATTLE OF THE PLANETS: JASON
Jason infiltrates a group to find the people who murdered his parents. (Top Cow, $4.99)

CENTRAL CITY VOL. 1
After World War III, people have gotten corrupt. Only Kaede and her fellow Disposers stand between existence and the final destruction of the world. Saya (I.C. Entertainment, $7.95)

CERES, CELESTIAL LEGEND VOL. 4: CHIDORI
Aya's own family tried to kill her on her 16th birthday. Can she rescue her twin brother? Yu Watase (Viz, $9.95)

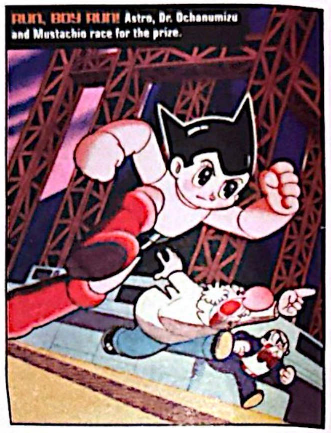
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON VOL. 4
Li Mu Bai seems to be defeated by a Shaolin punk, but he has a trick up his big sleeve. Andy Seto (ComicsOne, $13.95)

DEMON DIARY VOL. 1
Raenef is a lousy demon, so they send him to the illustrious teacher Eclipse to tutor him—but soon they have more on their minds…(TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

DRAGON BALL VOL. 11
The evil Master Crane's pupils, Chaozu and Tienshinhan are determined to defeat Goku, Yamcha and Krillin! Akira Toriyama (Viz, $7.95)

DRAGON BALL Z VOL. 11
Goku and Frieza's battles continues across the devastated planet Namek. Can the universe be saved? Akira Toriyama (Viz, $7.95)

GHOST IN THE SHELL II: MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE #6
Chroma's in a jam. She's not sure if she's in VR or the real world—but she definitely has enemies all around her, attempting to cause her death. Masamune Shirow (Dark Horse, $3.50)


RUN, BOY RUN! Astro, Dr. Ochanumizu and Mustachio race for the prize.

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR VOL. 4
Kenshiro is left for dead, but he can still blow up peoples' heads with a punch—and that ain't bad. Hara Tetsuo (Gutsoon!, $17.95)

HOW TO DRAW MANGA #[illegible]
Special *Gold Digger* issue where Fred Perry teaches you the tricks of his trade. ([illegible] Press, $4.95)

KARE KANO VOL. 3
Yukino and Soichiro are so happy they've forgotten to study. Now their parents want them to break up to get their grades up. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

KODOCHA VOL. 7
Sana and Hayama have finally confessed they like each other—so, why is Sana determined not to go out? (TOKYOPOP, $[illegible])

LOVE HINA VOL. 10
During a power outage, Naru begins to realize she may be the girl of Keitaro's dreams. Ken Akamatsu (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

MAN OF MANY FACES VOL. 1
Follow the adventures of a young thief and the woman who loves him, in this romantic comedy that starts in third grade and ends up beyond high school. CLAMP (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

PROJECT ARMS VOL. 1: AWAKENINGS
A top-secret group wants to bring about the next evolution of man—whether humanity's ready or not! Ryaji Minagawa (Viz, $9.95)

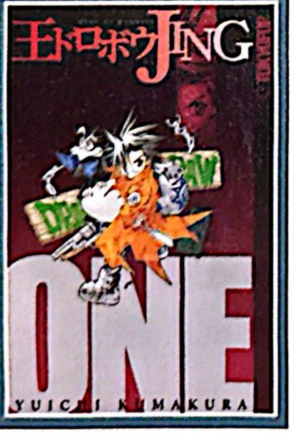
HOT PICK

JiNG: KiNG OF BaNDiTS VOL. 1

By Yuichi Kumakura (TOKYOPOP, May, $9.99)

WHY IT'S COOL Take the action, intrigue and daring robberies of Lupin the 3rd—and then turn Lupin into an arrogant, near invincible, teenage kid named Jing. Now stick this kid into an amazing world filled with boundless treasures, diabolical monsters, insanely deadly traps, flying pirate ships, and a talking Dodo bird named Kir. Together, no danger is too great and no treasure too large for the duo. A great read.

WHAT IT'S ABOUT Jing sets his sights very high… in the sky! There's rumors of a floating pirate ghost ship in the area, stuffed with zombies, who are themselves stuffed with gold! Jing figures the bounty on that vessel is well worth risking the wrath of a few stupid zombies. But when he hitches a ride on board the ship, he finds it's actually a luxury casino with a terrifying curse—the gamblers are playing with gold that bites those who try to hoard it—and the greedier they are, the harder they bite. Can Jing grab the loot with all his fingers intact? ■ JC



RAIJIN COMICS # 21-24
Another collection of comics by some of the best and brightest in manga, including *Fist of the Blue Sky, Slam Dunk, City Hunter, Baki the Grappler, Guaardian Angel Getten* and more. (Gutsoon! $4.95)

SCRYED VOL. 2
In the wastelands, HOLY and LAWLESS fight for control with super-powered beings called Alters. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

SHONEN JUMP #7
Monthly manga anthology with *Dragon Ball Z, Yu Yu Hakusho, Yu-Gi-Oh!, One Piece, Naruto* and more! (Viz, $4.95)

SUPER MANGA BLAST #32
Anthology series collecting *3x3 Eyes, Shadow Star, Seraphic Feather, Club 9* and more. Various (Dark Horse, $5.99)

VOLTRON: DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE #1
As the galaxy is ripped apart by strife and war, the Galactic Union sends five pilots on a desperate mission. Dan Jolley (Image, $2.50)

YOU AND ME VOL. 4: FOR LOVE OR MONEY
When Maiko disappears, two secret agents attempt to find her. Who is their boss? Hiroshi Aro (IC Enterainment, $[illegible]95)

YU-GI-OH! VOL. [illegible]: THE MILLENNIUM PUZZLE
Now that [illegible] Yugi has solved the Millennium Puzzle, a wh[illegible] new set of problems has arisen. Kazuki Takaha[illegible] (Viz, $7.95)

YU YU HAKUSHO VOL. 1: GOODBYE, MATERIAL WORLD
In death, Yusuke's life is changed by an act of redemption. Now the powers-that-be in the afterlife aren't sure where to "place" him. Yoshihiro Tagashi (Viz, $7.95)

JUNE

ADVENTURES OF HAMTARO VOL. 3
Join Hamtaro, his friends, and his human, Yukari on lots of fun tales. Ritsuko Kawai (Viz, $9.95)

BRAIN POWERD VOL. 1
An alien ship has the key to destroying the world, and Hime and his mecha are out to keep it safe. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

COWBOY BEBOP: SHOOTING STAR VOL. 2
After the Scorpion gets the Bebop crew in trouble with the mob, Spike and the others flee for the lives. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

CRAYON SHINCHAN VOL. 5
Take every problem child you can think of and combine them—that's little precocious five year-old Shinchan. See him terrorize his family and more! Yoshito Usui (ComicsOne, $9.95)

DRAGON HUNTER VOL. 1
In Kaya you have power if you can control dragons or slay them—it's a dangerous business where failure equals death. Hong-Seock Seo (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

G GUNDAM VOL. 1
Domon Kasshu has vowed to find his brother, who murdered their mom and stole the powerful Devil Gundam—and win the Gundam Tournament as well. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

IRON WOK JAN VOL. 5
Jan and his competitors are in the finals of the First National Young Adult Chinese Cuisine Cooking Contest. Shinji Saijyo (ComicsOne, $9.95)

LUPIN III VOL. 4
Lupin and Fujiko match wits and sex appeal—with a priceless Rembrandt painting at stake. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

MARMALADE BOY VOL. 7
When Yu discovers who her father is, the knowledge could destroy the entire family! (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

RAVE MASTER VOL. 3
With the Ten Commandments sword fixed, Haru can again search for the Dark Brings. But the Demon Card gang stands in his way. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR: WELCOME TO LODOSS ISLAND VOL. 2
Why does a fire demon threaten to consume the world with laughter and what does this threat have to do with the missing Woodchuck? (CPM Manga, $15.95)

SAMURAI DEEPER KYO VOL. 1
In the year 1604, bounty hunter Yuya has caught a boy with a secret—he possesses the spirit of a legendary assassin. (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

SLAYERS SPECIAL: NOTORIOUS
Ninjas! Clones! And fanboys, oh my! Sorcereresses Lina and Naga go on another (mis)adventure! (CPM Manga, $15.95)

TOKYO MEW MEW VOL. 2
Ichigo may have turned into a crime-fighting catgirl, but she needs to find the rest of the elite Mew Mew team! (TOKYOPOP, $9.99)

GETTING TO KNOW

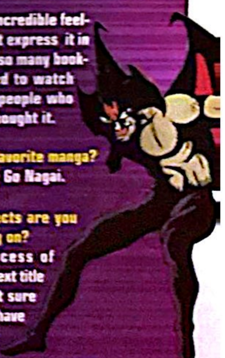
HIROSHI ARO

No stranger to sexy hijinks and comedy, Hiroshi Aro is well-known for his hits *You & Me* and *Mikoto Diary*, available from I.C. Entertainment. But he's made his broadest impact in America with *Futaba-Kun Change*, which asks all those naughty questions of what happens when a boy can transform into a girl that *Ranma 1/2* politely ignores…with hilarious answers.

FUTABA KUN CHANGE
YOU!

What made you want to be a manga creator?
Until I was 20 years old, manga was just a hobby for me. But when I was about to graduate from school, I was forced to find a job. I couldn't imagine myself wearing ties and going to work, so I thought once again what I really wanted to do and becoming a manga artist seemed like the most decent possibility at that time.

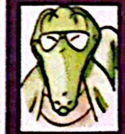
How did it feel the first time you saw your work in print?
It was the most incredible feeling…I still cannot express it in words. I went to so many bookstores and I used to watch and observe the people who picked it up and bought it.



Do you have any favorite manga?
I love anything by Go Nagai.

What other projects are you currently working on?
I am in the process of preparing for my next title but I am really not sure which ideas that I have will be successful.

What's up with the alligator that appears in all of your manga?



That's me, actually. I thought to draw myself as myself would be kind of dull, so I picked an alligator out of a book I had laying around my studio. ■ JC

Translated by Sachiko Uchida-Bennett.

STEALING THE SPOTLIGHT

LUPIN THE 3RD CAPTURED ALIVE IN HOLLYWOOD

CAN I INTRODUCE YOU TO THE CASTING COUCH?

ENSEMBLE ACT Lupin isn't starring alone—Fujiko (above), Goemon (below) and the gang are in on it too!

In over 30 years, Lupin the 3rd has had countless manga, anime TV shows, and movies made about him—and Hollywood wants in on the deal.

Gerald R. Molen, Oscar-winning producer of *Schindler's List*, recently acquired the live-action film rights to *Lupin the 3rd*, the wily gentleman-thief who spawned a long-running series, eight features, and thirteen television specials in Japan. The powerhouse producer wants to help the globe-trotting bandit steal box offices across America.

At a Japanese press conference, Molen officially declared that he signed a deal with both original manga creator Kazuhiko Kato (a.k.a. Monkey Punch) and TMS Entertainment for the live-action film rights to the manga series *Lupin III*, which first began publishing in 1967, has sold over three million copies worldwide, and been translated in more than 100 countries. The classic '70s TV series is currently airing on Cartoon Network and being released on DVD through Pioneer.

Molen will produce at least one in a possible series of *Lupin* films though no schedule or distributor has been set. As part of the deal, Monkey Punch required that Lupin, his gun-toting sidekick Jigen, samurai ally Goemon, untrustworthy infatuation Fujiko, and bumbling Interpol nemesis Zenigata all be present in the movie.

"One thing we're not going to do is change anything that has been so brilliantly laid out before over 30 years," Molen told the Associated Press, so long th[illegible] *Lupin* fans have no need to [illegible]. "But there may be some [illegible] license that we may [illegible] to make the st[illegible]

M[illegible] was elated [illegible]ying, "I'd be [illegible] continued as [illegible]007 series." If [illegible] one thing [illegible] fans know, [illegible] that for [illegible], anything is possible. ■ Bryan [illegible]man

THE BUZZ

HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST?

'KILL BILL' GETS ANIMATED Production I.G. (*Ghost in the Shell*, *Love Hina*) has announced that they've produced about 10 minutes of footage for Quentin Tarantino's live-action kung-fu epic *Kill Bill*, starring Uma Thurman. The footage will appear in several sequences during the film, a rarity for live-action movies. Are animated versions of Thurman and Lucy Liu on the way? Time will tell!

I.G. LOVE N.Y. An anime sequel to director John Carpenter's cult film *Escape From L.A.* is due in 2004! Production I.G. will handle all the animation and character design, while original director John Carpenter will do the music, and Kurt Russell will provide Snake's voice. Look for a trailer in this summer's DVD reissue of *Escape From New York*.

INITIAL D REVS UP TOKYOPOP has been building anticipation for street-racing anime *Initial D*, about Japanese street racing. Besides releasing the upcoming TV series on DVD, TOKYOPOP has said that they are working to debut the Initial D full-length feature at this summer's Big Apple Anime Fest convention in NY. ■ BR

NIGHT RIDER *Initial D*'s Takumi may be racing to American movie screens.

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

BANDAI'S 'JUNKERS' BECOMES GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

You can't teach an old dog new tricks, but you can put a new dog on the big screen.

The heartwarming, anime tearjerker *Junkers, Come Here* will makes its North American debut at the Cinematheque's Anime Festival in early May at the Egyptian Theater in Los Angeles, to be followed by a limited run in select theaters across the country.

FUTURE'S SO BRIGHT Hiromi and Junkers have become big stars since their film premiere in Japan.

Directed by Junichi Sato (*Sailor Moon*), *Junkers, Come Here* is about 11-year-old Hiromi, whose parents are extremely busy with their work, leaving her at home with a housekeeper, a live-in tutor, and a dog. "Of course, the dog is Junkers—but he's a talking dog, with a special power to make three of Hiromi's wishes come true," explains Bandai producer Miho Kinoshita. "When Hiromi finds out that her parents are considering a divorce, but being a good girl that she is, she just can't bring herself to say that's not what she wants. With the help of Junkers, she is able to stop her parents from getting a divorce in the end. It's cute, funny, sad, and has a happy ending."

The movie was originally released in Japan in 1995, and is based off the1991 novel by Naoto Kime. Anime fans looking for a cute family film only need to turn their web-browsers to www.bandai-ent.com for local listings. ■ BR

COMING SOON?

YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS HAVE MOVIES TOO!

HAMS ON THE LAM Are Hamtaro and the gang just too cute for America?

Although we're happy with the lesser-known anime films making it to theaters, there's a lot of movies out for today's anime hits that seem to have an audience secured. We just had to ask, why aren't these flicks on the way?

BEYBLADE The tops are still spinning furiously in Japan, which premiered the first *Beyblade* in 2002. Tyson & Kai enter a mysterious top tourney, with dire consequences.

HAMTARO The *Hamtaro* TV show, while starting out small here is the leading kids show in Japan, and has two movies of those hyper-adorable hamsters.

INU-YASHA With *Inu-Yasha* a hit on Cartoon Network, its legions of fans are praying for a release of two *Inu-Yasha* movies: *The Movie – A Love That Transcends Time* and *Inu-Yasha: Kagome In the Midst of the Castle of Dreams.*

YU-GI-OH! That's right—there is a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* movie, and there aren't any plans to bring it over, surprisingly. In the film, a kid named Shogo gets the rare Red Eyes Black Dragon card, but is too timid to play with it. Then Seto Kaiba holds a tournament, and forces Shogo and Yugi to enter. ■ BR

WORLD BOX OFFICE

JAPAN ASIDE, HOW DID 'SPIRITED AWAY' DO?

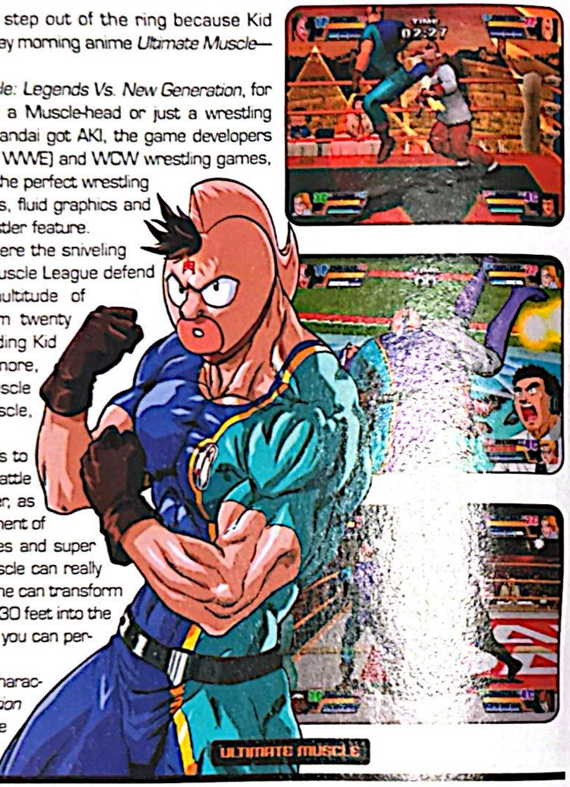
Following its July 2001 release in Japan, *Spirited Away* became quite the international sensation, grossing an estimated $260 million worldwide, thus placing it #146 on the Entertainment Insiders list of the Top 200 global movie hits of all-time. Here's how the final grosses for Hayao Miyazaki's masterwork broke down across the world. ■ BR

GLOBAL GROSS RECEIPTS 2001 - 2003

COUNTRY	OPENING DATE	CUMULATIVE GROSS
Japan	July 20, 2001	$234,000,000
South Korea	July 14, 2002	$11,400,000
France	April 10, 2002	$6,500,000
U.S.	Sept. 20, 2002	$5,600,000
Hong Kong	Dec. 13, 2001	$3,000,000
Taiwan	Dec. 28, 2001	$1,100,000
Spain	Oct. 27, 2002	$1,000,000
Australia	Dec. 12, 2002	$154,000
Norway	Jan. 24, 2003	$100,000

KING OF THE RING

'ULTIMATE MUSCLE' TO SMACKDOWN ALL OTHER WRESTLING GAMES



All other wrestling videogames better step out of the ring because Kid Muscle—star of the Fox Box's hit Saturday morning anime *Ultimate Muscle*—is climbing to the top rope.

This June, Bandai will release *Ultimate Muscle: Legends Vs. New Generation*, for the Nintendo GameCube, and whether you're a Muscle-head or just a wrestling game fan, you can't miss it. Why? Because Bandai got AKI, the game developers behind the legendary Nintendo 64 WWF (now WWE) and WCW wrestling games, to make it! Using what game enthusiasts call "the perfect wrestling game engine", AKI uses easy yet deep controls, fluid graphics and an amazing and comprehensive Create-a-Wrestler feature.

Ultimate Muscle is the hilarious anime where the sniveling yet occasionally heroic Kid Muscle and the Muscle League defend the Earth against the evil DMP in a multitude of wrestling matches. Players can select from twenty superstar wrestlers from the hit show, including Kid Muscle, Terry Kenyon, Dik Dik Van Dik, and more, but also the previous incarnation of the Muscle League—including Kid Muscle's dad King Muscle, Ramenman and Buffaloman.

Ultimate Muscle features a variety of modes to play, such as single-player story mode, battle royale, versus, or tag-team action in multiplayer, as gamers floor opponents with an insane assortment of techniques—include impossible wrestling moves and super powers ripped right out of the anime. Kid Muscle can really pull off the Kinniku Buster, the nefarious Sunshine can transform into different deadly shapes, everyone can leap 30 feet into the air—and depending on the tag teams you pick, you can performs super moves like a four-man piledriver!

Besides graphics, fun gameplay and all the characters from the show, *Legends Vs. New Generation* also uses a cel-shaded look to even better capture the show. ■ Madelyne Summers

BITS OF BYTES

THE LATEST WORD ON GAMING

ANGELS IN THE OUTFIELD As part of producer GAINAX's "Renewal of Evangelion" project, Bandai announced that it is working on a new RPG for the PlayStation 2 based on *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Although none of the other *Eva* videogames have made it over to America yet, the rumor mill says this one could do it!

ARMS OUT, STOMACH IN Bandai plans to release a PlayStation 2 game based on the popular anime and manga series, *Project A.R.M.S.*, by Ryouji Minagawa (who also worked on the manga series *Spriggan*). Gamers will be treated to 3D beat 'em up action. The anime is currently being released by Viz.

SOLID NINTENDO Konami has just announced a *Metal Gear* game for Nintendo's GameCube. Whether this will be the extras-laden *MGS2: Substance*, a remake of an older game (maybe the original *MGS*?), or a brand-new game entirely should be revealed at E3 (Electronics Entertainment Expo) in May. ■ MS

MGS2: SUBSTANCE

NOT-SO-FINAL FANTASY

FFX GETS SEQUEL AND SHORT SHORTS!

For 16 years, the *Final Fantasy* series was called that because they were the "last" stories of their particular worlds. But no more! Square has announced that their hit *Final Fantasy X* will get a sequel, called *FFX-2* (pronounced Ten-Two).

Two years after *FFX*, former summoner Yuna is now a sphere-hunter in a much more prosperous world. One day she finds a sphere containing the image of Tidus (lost hero of *FFX*), and sets out with thief Rikku, and swordswoman Paine, to find him.

FFX-2 isn't just a sequel, however. The battle system has been revamped with faster battles and chain combos using all three characters at once. Each character can also change classes in the thick of battle—from gunner to white mage and more—through the Fashion system, which changes powers and outfits! Also, instead of the linear quest of *FFX*, players can choose where to search for Tidus across the world of Spira, and the choices the player makes will determine the events of the game.

Most notable is the design change of the characters, as the demure Yuna is now sporting Daisy Duke cut-off shorts, and a more grown-up Rikku seems to have borrowed her threads from Christina Aguilera. Whether you're a fan of Final Fantasy RPGs or fan service, *Final Fantasy X-2* shouldn't disappoint this November. ■ Robert Bricken

TO IMPORT OR NOT TO IMPORT?

BRING IT!

SAKURA TAISEN (PLAYSTATION 2)

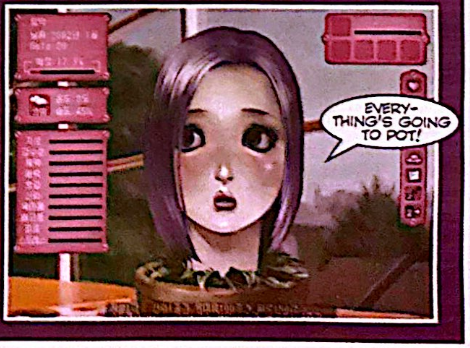
The *Sakura Taisen* (a.k.a. *Sakura Wars*) franchise has been rocking Japan for nearly a decade. It follows the story of an all-girl, secret military branch created by the Japanese government sworn to protect Tokyo from demonic attacks…in the early 20th century. This Imperial Floral Assault Unit is Japan's mystical defense team, as well as pilots of rare steam-powered mecha suits called Uba Spirit Armor. The games blend hardcore mecha action and dating simulations, as your character tries to figure out which of the lovely pilots to love.

芝居には自信がありますよ!!
自分は任務中です！
それより君のことが知りたいな

KEEP IT!

TOMAK: SAVE THE EARTH (PC)

Japanese videogamers are famous for loving dating simulations (like *Sakura Taisen*), where you go through all the hassles of dating with none of the live-action benefits. Which by no means explains *Tomak: Save the Earth*. *Tomak* is a dating sim where the girl is a head in a flowerpot. You can feed her, play with her, change her hair and hat…okay, we're pretty fuzzy about what actually goes on, but that's because the head just freaks us out. Based on your actions, Tomak gets happy, or sad, or angry, just like a real girl's head.



RELEASE SCHEDULE

WE PICK 'EM, YOU PLAY 'EM, HERE'S WHAT'S COMING THIS SUMMER

.HACK//MUTATION

MAY

ADVANCE WARS 2

The sleeper hit of the GameBoy Advance launch, *Advance Wars* was the perfect handheld game—just tanks blowing the bejeezus out of each other. Nintendo will try to up the addiction rate with more options, better graphics and more...tank! (Nintendo, GBA)

ENTER THE MATRIX

If the *Animatrix* isn't enough, there are still more ways to enter the... um...Matrix. Mixing action/fighting/driving/exploration, along with the trademark *Matrix* movie feel, players will be treated to an all-out action extravaganza. (INFOGRAMES, PS2/GC/Xbox/PC)

.HACK// MUTATION

The second installation in the four-part RPG/anime series *.hack* from Bandai continues the spiraling addiction into The World for the .hackers out there. Kite's still trapped in the game, but more questions need to be answered. Players logging in this pseudo-MMORPG that offers a mix of action, enigmatic characters, twisting storylines, coupled with another free anime DVD! (Bandai, PS2)

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

Unleash devastating combos, juggle and tag team it, as over 50 characters deliver the ultimate 2D arcade fighter to the Xbox. Featuring the most popular Capcom characters, along with Marvel Comics' greatest heroes and villains, let the button mashing-mania begin! (Capcom, Xbox)

MEGA MAN: NETWORK TRANSMISSIONS

Mega Man returns in another adventure to battle a deadly virus in this 2D cel-shaded action/platform game. In the next-gen console version of the *Mega Man Battle Network* games for the GBA, a computer-program Mega Man is called upon to save the virtual world from contamination. With an array of weapons and attacks at his disposal, Mega Man sets out to seek and delete this threat, along with anyone who gets in his way. (Capcom, GC)

SONIC ADVENTURE DX

Making its way over from the Sega Dreamcast, *Sonic Adventure DX* for the GameCube allows players to control six characters through 50 levels of gameplay. Sonic and the gang return to thwart the evil plans of Dr. Robotnik. Blending action, puzzle-solving, [illegible] collection and exploration, and features GameBoy Advance connectivity[illegible] GC)

JUNE

CROUCHING TIGE[illegible]GON

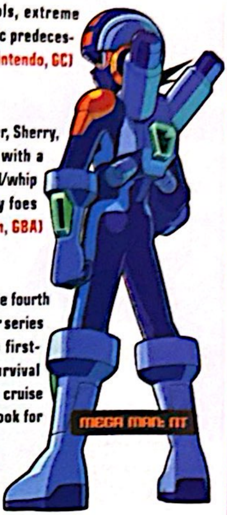
Based on the Aca[illegible]-winning film, *Crouching Tiger,* [illegible] is an action game promising a[illegible]ts and feet for players to dart a[illegible]ings and treetops. The story [illegible]amers fight to obtain the Green [illegible]word with the movie's characters [illegible], PS2/GC)

DRAGON BALL Z: LEGAC[illegible] GOKU II

An action/adventure sequel to *Legacy of Goku.* Power up and battle your way through an onslaught of *DBZ* villains from the Majin Buu saga. Players guide Goku through martial arts tournaments and fights for the universe itself. (Infogrames, GBA)

F-ZERO

Zooming onto the GameCube, this SNES classic gets a major overhaul—programmed by Sega for Nintendo, no less!—and promises to deliver the ultimate ride for futuristic racing fans. *F-Zero GC* will sport stunning visuals, tighter controls, extreme speeds and all the goodness of its classic predecessor—and a multiplayer mode to boot. (Nintendo, GC)



MEGA MAN ZERO 2

This time our hero along with his partner, Sherry, are taking out robot baddies infected with a deadly virus. Armed with a new chain rod/whip weapon, Mega Man will beat down any foes foolish enough to challenge him. (Capcom, GBA)

RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM

Relentless, gory and dead on as usual, the fourth installment in the *Resident Evil: Survivor* series terrifies players into submission with first-person shooting instead of regular survival horror. Players attempt to escape from a cruise ship of horror, as flesh-eating guests look for their own surf n' turf. (Capcom, PS2)

RPG MAKER 2

Agetec's often delayed create-your-own game for hardcore RPG fans to enjoy is finally due. Players can customize their 3D RPG as they decide upon combat style, magic spells, storyline, characters and game maps, laid out with over 150 types of monsters. (Agetec, PS2)

RESIDENT [illegible] DEAD AIM

SUDEKI

Microsoft tries its hand with an RPG, and the results look straight out of Tokyo. Big-eyed fighters and magicians take on fierce foes. Gamers can choose from gunslingers, sorcerers, warriors or shape shifters as they combat and explore a world on the brink of destruction. (Microsoft, Xbox)

ULTIMATE MUSCLE: PATH OF THE SUPERHERO

If you don't have a PS2, Kid Muscle's GameBoy debut should do it! Take on the DMP with timing-based wrestling, while making friends with other wrestlers and embarrassing yourself with fart-based attacks. Based off the hit anime! (Bandai, GBA)

UNLIMITED: SAGA

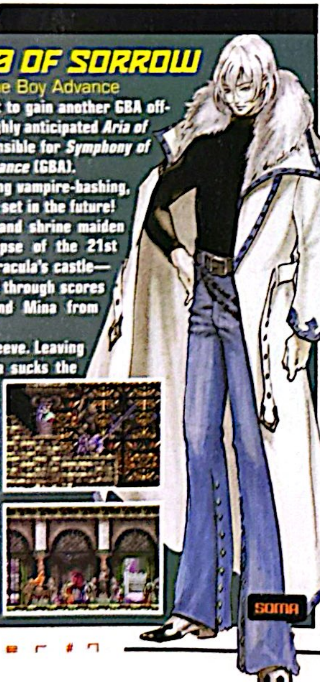
UNLIMITED: SAGA

Although not as famous as Final Fantasy, Square's other RPG series has legions of fans for its beautiful graphics, numerous characters and stellar (multiply branching and intertwining) storylines. The beautiful graphics are only matched by the innovative combat system. A must for any RPG fan! (Squaresoft, PS2)

HOT PICK

CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW

Due May 4th from Konami on Game Boy Advance



Konami's seminal *Castlevania* series is set to gain another GBA offspring this May, with the release of the highly anticipated *Aria of Sorrow,* designed by Ayami Kojima, responsible for *Symphony of the Night* (PS One) and *Harmony of Dissonance* (GBA).

It's more of that fantastic, side-scrolling vampire-bashing, but the twist is that for the first time, it's set in the future!

Foreign exchange student Soma Cruz and shrine maiden Mina black out on the first solar eclipse of the 21st Century. When they wake up, they're in Dracula's castle—updated for 2001! Soma will have to fight through scores of undead in order to save himself and Mina from Dracula's clutches.

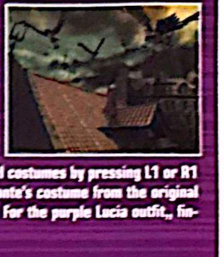
Luckily, Soma has a few tricks up his sleeve. Leaving behind the holy water and crosses, Soma sucks the souls of enemies, recreating their techniques, or building special attacks of his own. Another soul type allows him to transform into different beasts! Finally come the "ability" souls that add a permanent attribute, and can even be swapped via the GBA link-cable.

Castlevania games at worst are very good indeed, and *Aria of Sorrow* beats *Harmony of Dissonance* with its own whip. Let's hope the upcoming PS2 game is as good! ■ MS

HOT TIPS

FOR THE BEST GAMERS ONLY

DEVIL MAY CRY 2 (PS2)



Dante and Lucia like to dress up once in a while. Play the first mission, and save. Restart your game, and at the "Press Start Button" screen, press L3, R3, L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3 (L3 and R3 refer to the analog d-pads). Then load your game, and pick the Diesel costumes by pressing L1 or R1 at the Load Screen. If you want Dante's costume from the original game, beat Dante Must Die Mode. For the purple Lucia outfit,, finish Lucia Must Die Mode.

GUILTY GEAR X2 (PS2)

You're not done yet! To open Justice Story mode, and Guilty Gear mode (in the Options), finish all 60 story mode paths. If you want a specific stage to fight on, choose Versus or Training mode, and press R2 when selecting a character (at the opponent selection). For a Boss Stage Select, choose Versus CPU, Versus 2P, or Training, and highlight the "Random" fighter selection in the middle of the screen. Then press R2.

.HACK//INFECTION (PS2)

Want some extra goodies? Once you complete the game, read the e-mail from Bandai, head over to the Mummy Ship, and data drain the boss there to receive a rare weapon for Kite. The best weapon for Blackrose (or any Heavy Blade) is the Blaze Sword. Obtain it by Data Draining Hell Hounds in a Level 28-30 Keyboard (like Voluptuous Geothermal Paradise).

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER (GC)

Link himself undergoes a clothing change once you complete the game. Start another game using the same save file, and you'll notice that Link wears his pajamas from beginning to end. In addition, his sister Aril wears the skull shirt (seen in the ending), and there's an extra item in your inventory; the DX camera. Try snapping photos of various monsters and inhabitants... who knows what might happen?

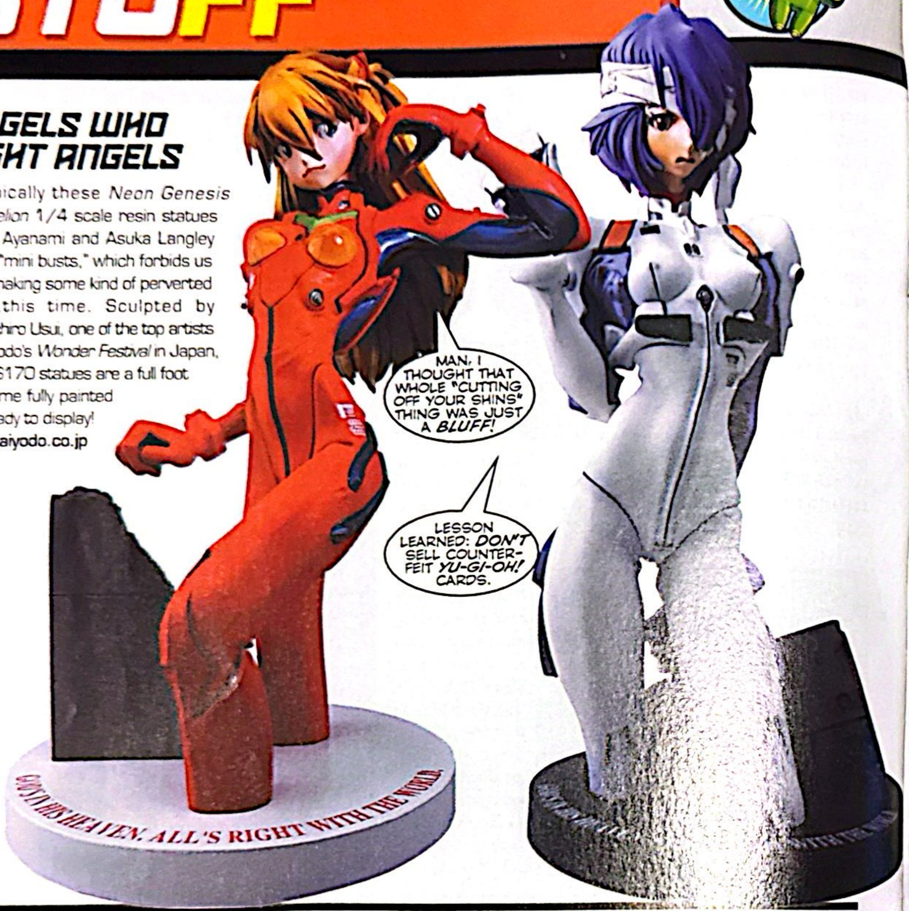
YU-GI-OH! DUNGEON DICE MONSTERS (GBA)

Don't like the monsters you're starting with? Simply start again until the random dice rolls select the coolest beasts! If you want some great dice monsters, then defeat Marik or Odion in Free Duels, and you'll be rewarded with fantastic dice such as Orgoth, Gemini Elf, and Metal Zoa. Finally, for easy wins, try saving your best dice (like the Mystic Horseman) by playing low-level monsters in the creation of the dungeon path. MS

Scanned with CamScanner

ANGELS WHO FIGHT ANGELS

Technically these *Neon Genesis Evangelion* 1/4 scale resin statues of Rei Ayanami and Asuka Langley aren't "mini busts," which forbids us from making some kind of perverted joke...this time. Sculpted by Masaichiro Usui, one of the top artists at Kaiyodo's *Wonder Festival* in Japan, these $170 statues are a full foot tall, come fully painted and ready to display! **www.kaiyodo.co.jp**

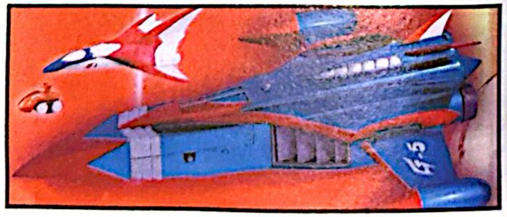

MAN, I THOUGHT THAT WHOLE "CUTTING OFF YOUR SHINS" THING WAS JUST A *BLUFF!*
LESSON LEARNED: *DON'T* SELL COUNTER-FEIT *YU-GI-OH!* CARDS.
GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN. ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.

IT'S A BUU-TIFUL LIFE

There are tons of video games out there based on anime, but not a whole lot of board games. That's probably what makes this *Dragon Ball Z* Majin Buu Saga game ($19.95) so exciting! Play as one of four characters going up against that Bloated Pink Wonder, with Battlefield tiles and damage cards, that make it feel like a real fight! Give it a shot, and watch your hair go yellow. **www.fantasyflightgames.com**

GATCHA HAVE IT

There are very few playsets which are also great toys, but this is one of them! With opening compartments and miniature vehicles and missiles, the fun won't end with this *Battle of the Planets* God Phoenix die-Cast vehicle—retailing for $99.99—especially when you get your hands on the 1/1-scale PVC replica of Mark's sonic *boomerang!* *www.unifive.co.jp*



IS SOMEONE OVERCOM-PENSATING A LITTLE?
SHH!

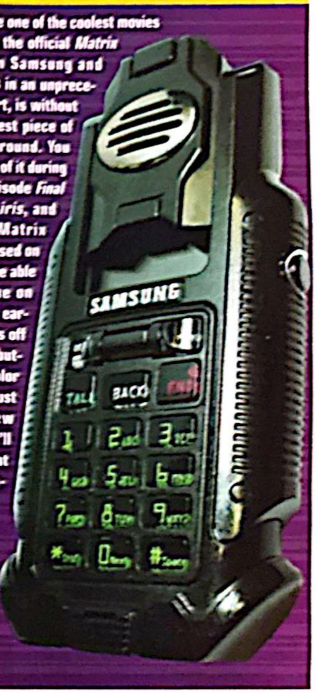
THE HITO-MINI BATTOUSAI

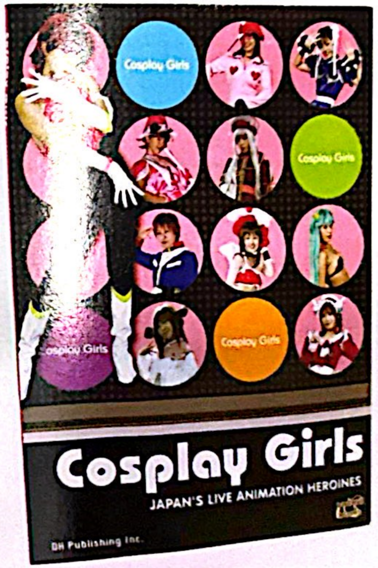
Just because he's tiny doesn't mean he can't kick your butt! Kenshin and friends are the coolest things around as Toycom's *Rurouni Kenshin*—a.k.a *Samurai X*—miniature figures, which come beautifully sculptured in various "action poses" for $5.99 each. Our personal favorite was Yahiko with the door—we wish all our doors could fly, too. **www.toycom.net**

HOT PICK

SAMSUNG'S 'MATRIX' CELL PHONE

The Matrix may be one of the coolest movies in the world, but the official *Matrix* cell phone from Samsung and Warner Brothers in an unprecedented joint effort, is without a doubt the coolest piece of personal tech around. You caught a glimpse of it during the Animatrix episode *Final Flight of the Osiris*, and when The Matrix Reloaded is released on May 15th, you'll be able to buy this phone on the same day! The earpiece cover slides off at the press of a button to reveal a color LCD screen are just some of the few cool goodies that'll keep the robots at bay! www.thematrixphone.com





PLAYING DRESS UP

Cosplay—or the art of dressing up like your favorite anime characters—has been a long tradition for otaku in Japan. Thus the book *Cosplay Girls* from DH Publishing (available only on Amazon.com for $30) serves two functions—tips on how to make costumes of characters from your favorite anime and videogames and pics of cute Japanese girls wearing them. Everybody wins! **www.dhp-online.com**

SUGAR AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE

Who can resist these kawaii *Snow Fairy Sugar* trading figures? Imported from Japan, each box is randomly packed with one of five different 5" figures featuring Sugar, Pepper, Salt, Saga, and one of Saga with Sugar for $7.50 each! Frosted "crystal" versions are randomly available as well, and each comes with a display stand. **www.yujin.co.jp**

YUJIN
Renewal Ver.

MY LIFE IS PAIN.
TRIGUN

IT'S THE CAT'S MEOW!

Although it appears several times throughout the *Trigun* series, no one knows quite what to make of this adorable little black cat. Whatever. We didn't need a reason to fall in love with it. We can't wait to perch this nifty Kuroneko Bobble Head ($12.99) on our desks, to stare at us with its mischievous knowing grin, and buggy green eyes. www.pioneeranimation.com

HEAVENLY MUSIC TO OUR EARS

There's no question whatsoever that the ladies of *Ah! My Goddess* are incredibly beautiful, but who knew that the music would be too? The *Ah! My Goddess* Movie Original Soundtrack is capable of standing on its own, from the light-hearted to the somber to the inspiring, especially the heart-wrenching "Cantilena Angel." Check it out from Pioneer for $14.95! www.pioneeranimation.com

HEAVY METAL MEAL

From Masamune Shirow, the creator of the sci-fi hit *Ghost in the Shell*, comes Dark Horse's awesome metal *Intron Depot* lunch box ($19.95). Featuring a stunning girl from Shirow's acclaimed art book series, you're sure to be the envy of any anime fans who also eat lunch. Helps keep food sexy! www.darkhorse.com

HAM YOU DIG IT?

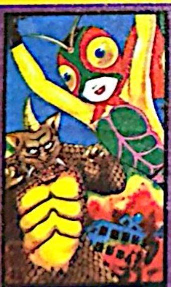
Who doesn't love Hamtaro? He's round, he's chubby, he's got adorable eyes the size of teacups, and now he can be yours to cuddle! You and Hasbro's *Hamtaro* 6" plush doll can have lots of great adventures, or simply curl up together and fall asleep. Don't forget his girlfriend, Bijou! Both sold separately for $7.99. www.hasbro.com

"SOLD" ONLINE

SOME OF THE CRAZY CRAP PEOPLE ARE SELLING ON THE NET

YU YU HAKUSHO APRON Because where you're going, you'll need it. $9.99

GUNDAM STAMPS Going postal in space has never been easier! $9.99



JAPANESE TOY STORE PAPER BAG Your guess is as good as ours. $4.99

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KANEDA MOTORCYCLE VINYL DECALS Look cool when you're high-tailing it. *Tetsuo*! $7.95

LUPIN THE THIRD CASINO SLOT MACHINE Now who's robbing who? $175.00

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WE REVIEW ALL OF ACADEMY AWARD WINNER HAYAO MIYAZAKI'S FILMS!
ON SALE JUNE 18, 2003
WIZARD
wizarduniverse.com

THANKS, JAPAN!

GOODIES SO BIZARRE, YOU GOTTA CROSS THE PACIFIC FOR 'EM!

PONG REVISITED
Collectible trading cards about cool video games like *Metal Gear Solid* are neat, but why produce a set devoted to the antiquated games of the '80s? Was *Elevator Action* not getting enough press?

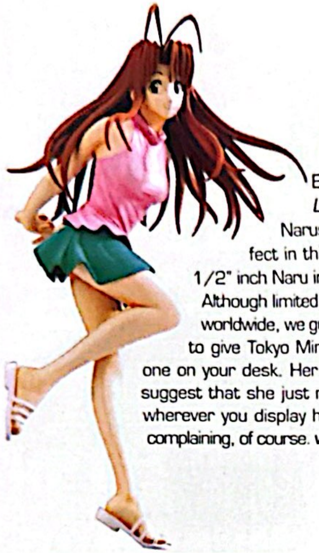
LITTLE GREEN MEN
Blow your nose at evil! Yep, nothing makes intergalactic invaders quiver like your own snot, so snatch up the boogers with this cute *Ultraman* tissue holder! Remember, when you're sinuses hurt, you're powered up!

MASKED CAMERAS?
The latest Japanese cell phones can shoot up to 15 seconds of digital video, which is all the more fun if you plaster the lens with Masked Rider decals first! Mom looks funnier with scarf-wearing biker aliens, right?

CUTE FIRE HAZARD
Studio Ghibli is most famous for bringing the world wholesome family entertainment. It is also noteworthy for encouraging children to set fires and take up smoking if this lighter featuring loveable characters from *My Neighbor Totoro* is any indication.

IT'S ALL IN THE DECK

No one can deny how much appeal *Yu-Gi-Oh!* has, or just how cool he is. Why not show your love for the game, with this awesome Yugi Power Cards skateboard? Made from all maple wood and aluminum trucks, with a concave deck shape, this skateboard rides as cool as it looks. Available for $29.95. **www.sportfun.com**



PRETTY IN PINK

Everything about *Love Hina*'s Naru Narusegawa is just perfect in this 1/8th scale, 7 1/2" inch Naru in Pink resin statue. Although limited to only 600 pieces worldwide, we guarantee you'll want to give Tokyo Mint $129.99 to put one on your desk. Her pose and her hair suggest that she just might start moving wherever you display her...not that we're complaining, of course. www.tokyomint.com

AS TIEMA GOES BY

Anyone who's seen *Metropolis*, inspired by Osamu Tezuka's manga, will tell you that it was an amazing film, full of amazing effects and, more importantly, touching likeable characters. Tiema, Kenichi, and Rock can be now yours as these amazing detailed PVC figures for $5.99 each. **www.jaspanet.or.jp**

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THE BIG NEWS
BATMAN'S NEW SIDEKICK
Jim Lee talks shop, Batman's bulk, and more...
Part 1 of 2
What does one of the most influential artists in comics have left to prove? Well, if you ask him—everything! And we did, as we had a chance to talk with fan-fave Batman artist Jim Lee... More
POST NEWS
> This week's new comic releases
> ToyFare Spotlight: Samurai Skeletor
EXCLUSIVES
Jingle Belle Statue by Electric Tiki Signed and numbered by Paul Dini Buy It Now! $30
HOT ITEM OF THE WEEK
World of Springfield KBBL Radio Station
Expand your collection with the latest Simpsons PX playset!
POLL
Q: Which upcoming 2003 comic book project are you most looking forward to?
1. Mike Turner's new projects
2. Wolverine by Greg Rucka and Darick Robertson
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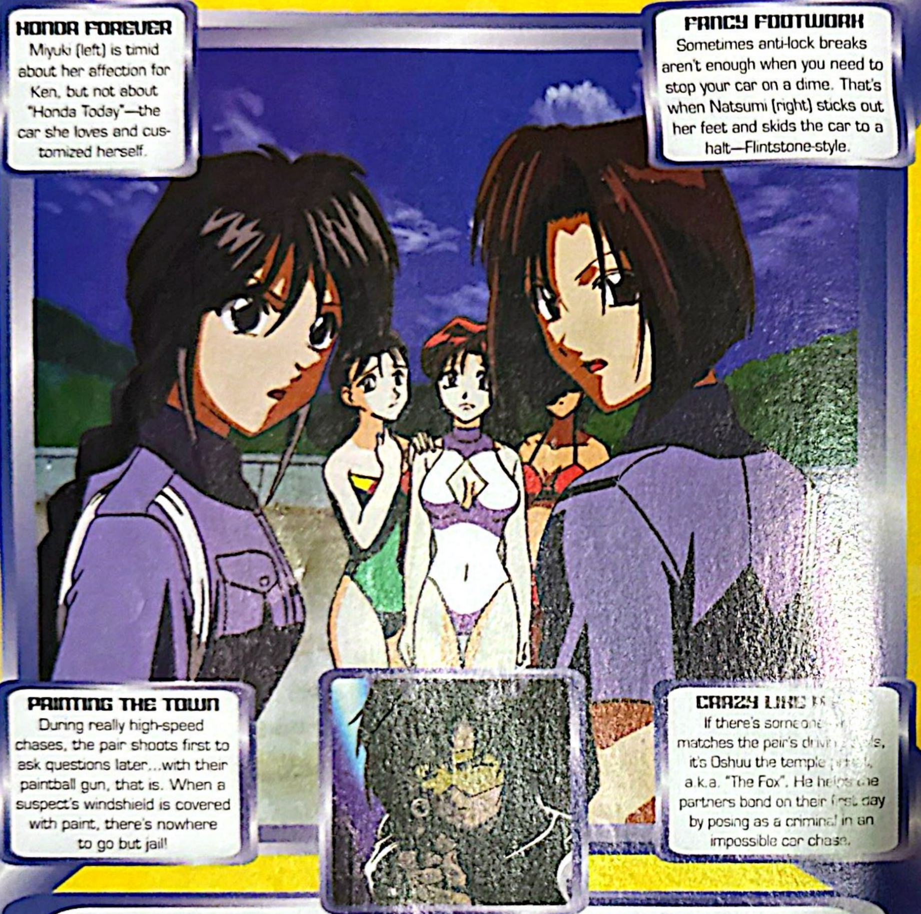
BY KANE LUNG

INSIDER PROFILE

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!'S MIYUKI AND NATSUMI



HONDA FOREVER
Miyuki (left) is timid about her affection for Ken, but not about "Honda Today"—the car she loves and customized herself.

FANCY FOOTWORK
Sometimes anti-lock breaks aren't enough when you need to stop your car on a dime. That's when Natsumi (right) sticks out her feet and skids the car to a halt—Flintstone-style.

PAINTING THE TOWN
During really high-speed chases, the pair shoots first to ask questions later...with their paintball gun, that is. When a suspect's windshield is covered with paint, there's nowhere to go but jail!

CRAZY LIKE A FOX
If there's someone who matches the pair's driving skills, it's Oshuu the temple priest, a.k.a. "The Fox". He helps the partners bond on their first day by posing as a criminal in an impossible car chase.

ORIGIN: Drag-racing challenges and over-the-top man-hunting (in every sense of the phrase) are all in a day's work for the Tokyo Highway Patrol's two star officers Miyuki Kobayakawa and Natsumi Tsujimoto. Ever since hot-headed, outspoken Natsumi teamed up with motherly Miyuki, the precinct—and the highways—have exploded in chaos and comedic clashes. With Natsumi's superhuman driving skills and Miyuki's mechanical genius, the two always get their man—except where their shyness over Chief Officer Shouji and Officer Ken is concerned. Trouble's always brewing as the good-natured officers get into each other's business, whether it be the latest cases or romance in the department!

NOW APPEARING: Created by *Oh My Goddess'* Kosuke Fujishima, *You're Under Arrest!* has had a ton of animation based on the hijinks of Miyuki and Natsume. Fans can catch the manga series in two volumes by Dark Horse. The OVA and first TV series are currently being released on DVD by Animeigo in four boxed sets. ADV Films is planning the DVD release of the first action-packed *YUA! Movie* in July and the *YUA!* Special, which is comprised of twenty seven-minute episodes scheduled for May 7. Hardcore fans can travel to Japan to catch the second TV series, the second movie and a live-action *YUA!* series to boot!

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